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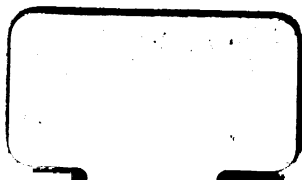
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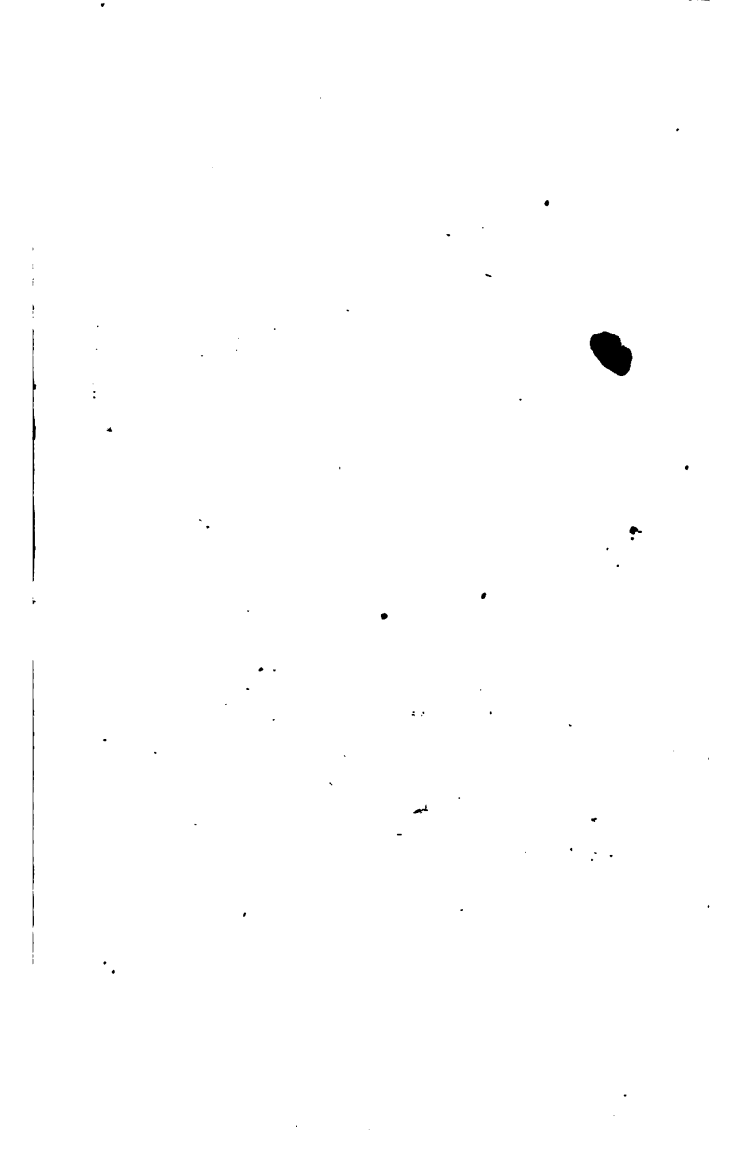
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BOOK XVIII, LINE 969.

978.

ORLANDO FURIOSO:

TRANSLATED

FROM THE ITALIAN

OF

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO;

WITH

NOTES,

BY JOHN HOOLE.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

Printed for Otridge and Son; R. Faulder; Cuthell and Martin;
Vernor, Hood, and Sharpe; J. Walker; J. Nunn; R. Lea; Lack-
ington, Allen, and Co; Cadell and Davies; Longman, Hurst,
Rees, and Orme; W.J. and J. Richardson; J. Booker; J. Murray;
and J. Harding;

At the Union Printing-Office, St. John's Square, by W. Wilson.

1807.

Ital 7412.3 (3)

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1828

THE
EIGHTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE ARGUMENT.

CHARLES and his Paladins attack Rodomont, and at last compel him to leave the city. He repasses the Seine, and hears that Doralis is carried off by Mandricardo. Rodomont being gone, Charles returns to the field. General battle renewed with great slaughter on both sides. Ferrau and Dardinello signalize themselves. Lurcanio killed by Dardinello. Gryphon being set at liberty, to revenge the shame he had suffered, makes a great slaughter among the people of Damascus. Norandino appeases him. Aquilant meets with Martano and Origilla, seizes and carries them to Damascus: end of that adventure. Norandino institutes another tournament in honour of Gryphon. Arrival of Sansonetto, Astolpho, and Marphisa, at Damascus. Confusion on account of a suit of armour offered by the king as the prize of the victor. Marphisa, Astolpho, and Sansonetto, overthrow all opposers. Gryphon and Aquilant unhorsed. At last the four knights are known to each other, and peace is restored. Astolpho, Sansonetto, Gryphon, Aquilant, and Marphisa depart for France: they embark on board a ship; arrive at Cyprus; are overtaken by a dreadful storm. Account of the general battle resumed. Dardinello is slain by Rinaldo. The Pagans begin to give ground; at last the rout becomes universal, and the Pagans retire to their entrenchments. Medoro and Cloridano, two Moorish youths, leave their posts in the middle of the night, and venture into the enemy's camp in order to seek out, and give burial to the body of their dead master, Dardinello.

THE
EIGHTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

STILL, generous prince! my loyal muse displays
Your high deserts, and ever seeks to praise:
But much I fear too weak to' exalt your name,
She but defrauds you of a nobler fame.

Amidst your virtues, one above the rest 5
My tongue, my bosom ever has confess'd:
While open audience all from you receive,
None find you ever ready to believe
Each light report—your goodness will befriend
Th' accus'd when absent, oft attention lend 10
To each fair plea, and keep a gracious ear
When present, from himself his tale to hear;
And rather months and years the cause defer,
Than to another's wrong in hasty sentence err.

Had Norandino well his conduct weigh'd, 15
His lips might ne'er on Gryphon's head have laid
The doom unjust: while honour crowns your name,
He, unadvis'd, has stain'd his future fame.
Through him his people breathless on the plain,
Fall by the raging hand of Gryphon slain; 20

Who thrusts or whirls, by turns, the mortal steel,
 And thirty near the car his fury feel.
 Swift fly the rest, as terror bids them stray;
 One seeks the field, and one the beaten way:
 One hopes again to enter in the wall; 25
 Where each on each in mingled heaps they fall.
 Without a word or menace Gryphon glows
 With silent wrath, no soft compassion knows,
 But drives his sword amidst the trembling throngs,
 And takes dire vengeance for his former wrongs. 30
 Of those, who first dispersing o'er the plain,
 With nimble feet the city walls can gain,
 Impetuous some, as sense of danger sways,
 Forgetful of their friends the drawbridge raise.
 Some fly with ghastly looks in pale affright, 35
 Nor cast a look behind them in their flight:
 While wide in every distant quarter rise
 The shouting clamours and distressful cries.
 Fierce Gryphon, as aloft the bridge they drew,
 (Ill chance for them) two luckless wretches flew. 40
 Of these, one dash'd against the stony plain
 Pour'd from his batter'd skull the smoaking brain:
 One, wounded in the breast, fell headlong down,
 As up the walls he climb'd to reach the town:
 The trembling crowds, with terror chill'd, behold 45
 The breathless carcass from the ramparts roll'd.
 Great is the fear that many a mind appalls,
 Lest furious Gryphon should o'erleap the walls:
 Not deeper tumults could around prevail,
 Should the stern Soldan with his host assail 50
 Damascus' gates—arms flash, loud shouts ascend;
 Now here, now there the thronging people bend:

Timbrels and trumpets mingled pour around
The deafening noise, and to the skies resound.

But let us for awhile forbear to tell 55
What fortune next the gallant knight befel :
Now must the verse the deeds of Charles recite,
Who bent on Rodomont his fearless might,
And in his train seven daring warriors led,
T' avenge his subjects by the Pagan dead. 60
The foe defended with his scaly hide
Of proof resistless, every arm defy'd :
Eight spears at once from eight such warriors sent
He felt, yet scarcely to the tempest bent :
But as the vessel, yielding to the gale, 65
Swift rises as the pilot shifts the sail
To catch the wind : so Rodomont arose,
Though scarce a mountain could have borne the blows.
To join the warlike eight whom late I told,
Full many a chief, whose actions Fame enroll'd, 70
Enclos'd the foe : with these the treacherous name
Of Gannelon, with these good Turpin came ;

Ver. 55. *But let us for awhile forbear to tell*] The story of Gryphon is continued in this book, ver. 395.

Ver. 71. — *with these the treacherous name
Of Gannelon, —*] An inveterate enemy to the houses of Rinaldo and Orlando, and as such recorded by Pulci, Boyardo, and other romance writers. Gannelon or Gano is frequently mentioned in Don Quixote.

Ver. 72. — *good Turpin —*] Turpin, archbishop of Rheims, reputed author of the fabulous history of Charlemain and his twelve peers: the authority of this prelate is frequently brought forth by Ariosto in evidence of many actions recorded in this poem, to which he is said to have been an eye-witness.

And Arimon, and English Edward, late
Receiv'd by Charles in Paris' regal gate.

As built on Alpine rocks, with stately pride, 75
A castle that has every force defy'd,
Unshaken stands, when whirlwinds sweeping round,
Tear oaks and beeches from the groaning ground;
Firm in himself the haughty Pagan stood,
Inflam'd with fury, and athirst for blood. 80

As roaring storms the coming bolt presage:
So vengeance follows his destructive rage.
At him, that nearest press'd, the stroke he dealt:
Hapless Ughetto of Dordona felt

The rushing blade: cleft to the teeth he dy'd, 85
Nor ought avail'd his helm of temper try'd.

On every limb by turns the Pagan found
Some weapon light, but light without a wound.
Secur'd from harm, the dragon's jointed scale
Impervious, made each sword and javelin fail. 90

And now, attending at their sovereign's call,
Each quits the gate and well-defended wall;
And hastes to battle, where his prince's sight
Swells every breast and strings each nerve for fight.

As when, amid the circus' bound enclos'd, 95
Stands a fierce lioness, for sport expos'd,
If chance a lordly bull is loos'd to wage
The public combat with her threat'ning rage,
Her tawny cubs behold (unseen before)

The stately beast and hear his dreadful roar: 100

They view his ample horns with strange amaze,
And while they view, with doubtful terror gaze:
But if their dam with savage teeth invade
The bull's strong chest, they haste their dam to aid:

Now at his back, now at his paunch they fly, 105
And thirst in blood their tender paws to dye.
Against the Pagan thus the Christians drew :
From roofs and windows some their weapons threw :
Some closer press'd, while, all around him rain'd,
His head a ponderous shower of arms sustain'd. 110
Still more and more they throng (a mingled train)
The space can hardly horse and foot contain.
From every part, like clustering bees, they pour ;
Though most, unarm'd, no warlike weapons bore,
And came but to be slain—the Pagan's rage 115
Could scarce suffice their numbers to engage.
Still grows his toil—still crowds to crowds succeed,
Though hundreds by his fatal prowess bleed.
His breath in shorter pantings comes and goes ;
He sees, unless his arm can stem the foes, 120
While yet unhurt his strength and limbs remain,
Hereafter must he hope t' escape in vain.

Now here, now there he turns his baleful eyes,
And every pass with numbers clos'd espies.
Around him now his murderous sword he threw ; 125
And swift, as fury urg'd, resistless flew
On Britain's late rais'd bands his force to shed,
The bands by Arimon and Edward led.
Whoe'er has from the throng'd piazza view'd
The giddy populace in heaps pursu'd 130
By some wild bull, that all the day has met
With goads and wounds, by men and dogs beset:
He foams, he snorts, he drives them round and round,
And this, now that he tosses from the ground :
Such may he deem, but far more dreadful shows 135
The cruel African amidst his foes !

Full twenty with his sword he cleaves in twain,
As many headless from his stroke remain,
He mows down lives; as by the pruner's hand
Young vines and sallows lopt bestrow the land. 140

Thus dreadful Rodomont the carnage spread
Where'er he pass'd: at length o'er piles of dead
He turn'd his steps to quit the hostile town,
But 'midst his flight no marks of fear were shown;
Retreating now the nearer Seine he views 145

That from the ramparts to the plain pursues
Its silent course—the throngs around him press,
Urge him behind, nor let him part in peace.

As in Nomadia's or Massilia's shade,
The generous beast whom hunters bold invade, 150

Even while he flies with noble fury burns,
And, threatening, slowly to his woods returns:

So Rodomont, in whose high soul appears
No abject thought, hemm'd in with swords and spears,
With darts and javelins like a bristled wood, 155
Slow drags his lingering steps to reach the flood.

Again he turns, again with brandish'd blade
A hundred sent to tread the Stygian shade.

At length, compell'd, he gives, to numbers, way,
Submits to fortune and resigns the day: 160

With all his arms he plunges in the tide;
His nervous limbs the flashing waves divide.

Afric ne'er bred his like; though Afric's earth
Gave Hannibal and great Antæus birth.

Soon as he reach'd the shore, his ruthless mind 165
Again repented that he left behind

The town unsack'd; again his thoughts aspire
Her sons to slay and wrap her walls in fire.

While thus he paus'd, one drawing near he view'd,
 That soon with other cares his wrath subdu'd: 170
 But who this envoy, fits not here to tell;
 First learn what chance in other parts befel.
 When Discord had receiv'd the high command
 To kindle strife amidst the Pagan band,
 She Fraud commissions in her stead to keep 175
 The convent's cells, nor let Contention sleep
 Till her return; then calls her sister Pride,
 Who in one dome accustom'd to reside
 Consents to go, but midst the holy train
 Bids, in her place, Hypocrisy remain. 180
 Now Pride and Discord on their baleful way
 To where encamp'd the Christian army lay
 Urge all their speed, when to their sight appears
 Afflicted Jealousy with jaundice fears:
 With her a dwarf, from Doralis the fair 185
 Dispatch'd to Rodomont the news to bear
 How late in Mandricardo's hand she fell;
 Nor need the muse again th' adventure tell.
 It chanc'd that Jealousy the dwarf had found,
 His message soon she learnt and whither bound; 190
 Then join'd with him an enterprise to share
 That seem'd to claim her own peculiar care.
 Well pleas'd was Discord Jealousy to view,
 But more her cause of coming when she knew
 From whom such hope of powerful aid she drew. 195 }

Ver. 172. *First learn* —] The story is continued in this book, ver. 200.

Ver. 185. *With her a dwarf* —] Dwarfs and damsels were common messengers in the days of chivalry, and as such often mentioned in Don Quixote.

Lo! hence the seeds to mix in mortal war
 Stern Rodomont and Agricanes' heir:
 For other chiefs she other plans may frame,
 But this suffices her to spread the flame.

Now with the dwarf arriving where the hand 200
 Of Rodomont destroy'd each Christian band;

They reach'd the Seine what time his silver tide
 The Turk had cross'd, who when the dwarf he spy'd,
 His wrath he smooth'd, his low'ring brow he clear'd,
 And sudden gladness in his looks appear'd: 205

All unprepar'd for what he soon must find,
 An insult which his soul had ne'er divin'd.
 The dwarf he met, and with a smiling face:
 How fares our dame, and whither bends thy pace?

Then he—Nor mine nor yours I call the dame 210
 To whom another now asserts his claim:
 But yester's son, as in her tent she lay,
 A single warrior hew'd his bloody way
 Through all her guards, and thence, by force convey'd
 The royal fair his weeping captive made. 215

He said; when Jealousy stept forth and press'd
 (Cold as an asp) the warrior to her breast.
 Now Discord strikes her flint the fire to raise,
 While Pride beneath the ready felw lays:
 Quick bursts the flame, through all the Pagan flies 220
 The raging pest and flashes from his eyes:

Ver. 216. — *Jealousy stept forth and press'd*

(*Cold as an asp*) the warrior to her breast.] Without danger of incurring the censure of blind partiality, often so justly charged on translators, I may surely venture to point out this passage to the reader, and indeed the whole description of the jealousy of Rodomont, as a fine allegorical picture.

He sighs, he groans, full horribly he roars,
Blaspheming Heaven and Heaven's immortal powers.
As when the tigress to her empty den
Too late returning snuffs the track of men, 225
And finds her darling young ones borne away,
Nor hills, nor streams, her raging course delay:
Thus the dread Saracen with fury burns,
Lead on!—he cries as to the dwarf he turns:
He seeks no steed, nor car, but, like the wind, 230
Flies o'er the plain and leaves the war behind:
No courser will he wait, resolv'd to take
The first that Fortune's gift his own shall make.
Then Discord, who his inmost soul survey'd,
Turn'd to her sister Pride, and smiling said: 235
His footsteps shall we guide to find a steed
That other contests, other woes will breed?
The care be mine, where'er he roves the land,
No horse but one shall meet his daring hand.
To Charles we turn, who now, the Pagan fled, 240
Forbade the flames extinguish'd more to spread:
His troops he marshall'd: some with ardour fir'd
To guard the posts that chief their aid requir'd:
The rest he sent against the Pagan train
To meet their strongest force in open plain; 245
And through each pass a numerous army pours,
From Saint Germano and Saint Victor's towers;
Then near Marcellus' gate bids every band,
Together join'd in rank of battle stand,
Inciting all their faithless foes to quell 250
With deeds that every future time might tell:

Ver. 240. *To Charles we turn* —] The poet follows Rodomont,
Book xxiii. ver. 237.

Their banners rang'd, he points their noble rage,
And gives the trumpet's signal to engage.

King Agramant had try'd, nor try'd in vain,
Though hemm'd with foes, his courser to regain : 255
Remounted now, against the knight* who lov'd
Fair Isabella, single fight he prov'd.

With king Sobrino bold Lurcanio clos'd :
Rinaldo stood against a troop oppos'd,
Whom (Fortune smiling on his dauntless might) 260
He slew, dispers'd, o'erturn'd, and chas'd in flight :
So far'd the war—when Charles his legions brought
To charge the rear where king Marsilius fought :
Beneath whose standards crowd the flower of Spain,
His foot the midst compose, his horse the wings sustain.
The monarch leads th' assault—the hills around, 266
The vales return the drum's and trumpet's sound.

Already now the Pagans seem'd to yield,
And soon, with broken files, had left the field,
Bût Falsirones came, and at his side 370
Grandonio, both in greater dangers try'd ;
With Balugantes, Serpentino fam'd,
And bold Ferrau who thus aloud exclaim'd :

O friends belov'd ! O ! once of martial might !
O ! brethren ! yet maintain this arduous fight ! 275
Give what to fame we owe—yon hostile train
Shall weave, like spiders' nets, their toils in vain !
Think what rewards, what honours must attend,
Should Fortune on this day our arms befriend :
Think what our loss and never-ending shame, 280
If basely driven from such a field of fame.

A ponderous spear he wielded as he spoke,
And aim'd at Berlinger the forceful stroke;
(Whose arm so well with Argaliffa sped,
He burst the fencing helmet from his head) 285
Now Berlinger o'erthrown, his fatal blade
Eight hapless warriors near him prostrate laid.
In other parts what warlike numbers fell
Before Rinaldo, scarce the muse can tell:
Thou might'st have seen, amidst th' embattled field 290
The flying squadrons to his fury yield.
No less Zerbino and Lurcanio, fir'd
With martial heat, the tongue of praise inspir'd;
That, with a speeding thrust Balestro slew,
This, Finaduro's helmet cleft in two: 295
The first the forces of Alzerbè sway'd,
That late before Tardocco's rule obey'd:
The second held beneath his high command,
Zamora, Saffa, and Morocco's band.
Was there (methinks you cry) with sword and shield
No knight of Afric to dispute the field? 301
Awhile attend—nor deem one worthy name
Shall pass defrauded of his rightful fame.
Nor shall Zumara's king be left unsung,
Brave Dardinello from Almontes sprung, 305
Whose lance, in rest against the Christians set,
Dulphino of the mount, and Elius met;
Hubert, of Mirford, Claudio of the grove:
On Pinamontes then his sword he drove,
On good Anselmo of Stanforma's powers; 310
And Raymond sent from London's stately towers:
These seven, renown'd in arms, to earth he threw,
Two senseless, one he wounded, four he slew.

But all his worth avail'd not to restrain
His people's panic and their ranks detain 315
To meet our troops, who, less in number, fought
With nobler warmth, and to the combat brought
Whate'er exalts the warrior in the field,
The skill to rest the lance, or lift the shield.
The Moors in Setta and Zumara bred, 320
Those of Morocco and Canara fled :
But with the foremost fled Alzerbe's train,
Whose flight the noble youth * oppos'd in vain.
At length, with threats and prayers by turns address,
He rous'd the flame in every generous breast. 325
If in your memory worthy yet to dwell
Almontes lives—this present hour shall tell :
This hour shall show, if midst his foes enclos'd,
You leave in me his son to death expos'd.
Stay ! I conjure you—by my tender age 330
From which your hopes could future fame presage !
Shall each brave chief by hostile swords be slain,
And none revisit Afric's lov'd domain ?
Surrounded here, all safety else deny'd,
Our firm knit bands alone can cleave the tide. 335
What fosse, what ramparts our return oppose,
What mountains rise between, what ocean flows !
Here let us rather die, than sink so low
To wait the mercy of a Christian foe.
O ! then be firm—in this, my friends, remain 340
Our dearest hopes, all other hopes are vain !
Like us the foes have but two hands to wield,
One soul to fire them, and one life to yield.

So spoke the generous youth, and speaking gave
The earl of Athol to the greedy grave. 345

The dear remembrance of Almontes ran
Through Afric's host, and spread from man to man :
Each deem'd it nobler now with glorious arms
To guard their lives, than fly impending harms.

William of Burnick, tall of stature, tow'd 350

Above his peers, but Dardinello's sword
Levell'd him with the rest—and near him reft
His life from Arimon and headless left :
(A Cornish champion)—as he press'd the plain
His brother hasten'd to his aid in vain. 355

Betwixt his shoulders Dardinello sent
The reeking steel, that through his bosom went.
Through Bogio's belly next he thrust the blade,
And freed him from his promise lately made :
Vainly he promis'd to his weeping wife, 360
Six moons should bring him back with fame and life.

Brave Dardinello near Lurcanio 'spy'd,
By whom, but then o'erthrown, Dochino dy'd,
Pierc'd through the throat ; by whom, with gory head,
Cleft to the teeth, lay bleeding Gardo dead. 365

He saw Alæus, dearer than his life,
Attempt too late to fly the bloody strife.
Full at his nape the stroke Lurcanio aim'd,
And stretch'd him dead : Almontes' son inflam'd
With thirst of vengeance, grasp'd his ready spear, 370
And vow'd to Macon (did his Macon hear)

Should slain Lurcanio that day's triumph grace,
His empty arms within the mosque to place.
Then through the ranks with rapid speed he flies,
And to his side so well the lance applies, 375

Pierc'd through and through he hurls him to the plain,
And instant bids his followers strip the slain.

What tongue shall ask if Ariodantes mourn'd
His brother's slaughter! If in rage he burn'd
With his own hand to give the vengeful blow, 380
And Dardinello send to shades below?

In vain he raves—not more the Pagan foes,
Than thronging Christians his design oppose:
Yet eager for revenge, now here, now there,
He whirls his sword, breaks through, and mows the war.

T' engage the Christian Dardinello flies, 386
But thronging round him spears and javelins rise,
And the thick press the knights to meet denies. }

One chief no less the Moorish troop destroys,
Than one the English, Franks, and Scotch annos: 390
Yet these to close in battle fate withstands,
One doom'd to fall, but fall by greater hands.
Behold Rinaldo comes by fortune led
To gain new fame from Dardinello dead.

But here no more—the muse averts the strain 395
From deeds of glory on the western plain,
To where she Gryphon left, whose arm o'erthrew,
With vengeful rage, Damascus' trembling crew.
King Norandino, whom the din alarms,
The city leaves with all his court in arms: 400
A thousand men his faithful guard supply,
And round he sees the timorous people fly.

Ver. 396. *From deeds of glory—*] This battle is continued in this book, ver. 1005.

Meantime, the vulgar crowd dispers'd and fled,
Those luckless arms, that late his shame had bred,
(Such arms as fortune then vouchsaf'd to lend) 405
Brave Gryphon seiz'd his person to defend;
And near a temple, with strong walls immur'd,
Whose scite a deep enclosing fosse secur'd,
Upon a narrow bridge his station chose
To guard him safely from surrounding foes. 410
Behold where from the portal near him drew,
With many a shout and threat, the warrior crew.
Yet Gryphon still, unmov'd, his place maintain'd,
As if his fearless soul their force disdain'd:
Onward he sprung: he grasp'd his glittering blade, 415
And many a gasping warrior breathless laid;
Then, to the bridge again retreating, lay
Safe from attack, and held his foes at bay.
Again he issu'd, and again withdrew,
And dy'd each time the ground to crimson hue, 420 }
While horse and foot by turns to earth he threw.
Still more and more the troops uniting swarm,
The deepening battle wears a direr form,
When Gryphon pausing views with anxious eyes
The hostile files that all around him rise: 425
Fast from his wounded thigh and shoulder trail'd
The purple streams; his breath and vigour fail'd:
But Virtue, watchful o'er her sons, inclin'd
To peace and pardon Norandino's mind:
While from the walls he led his martial train, 430
He view'd around the ghastly heaps of slain;
The gaping wounds, that seem'd by Hector given,
With cruel steel through temper'd armour driven,

And saw how far his late decree had wrong'd
 A knight to whom all worth and praise belong'd. 435

When near him now the gallant youth he view'd
 (Whose single arm such numbers had subdu'd,
 That dy'd the watery fosse to fearful red,
 Entrench'd behind a ghastly pile of dead)
 Like stern Horatius, that on Tyber's tide 440
 With nervous strength the Tuscan power defy'd,
 Heart struck with grief and shame, he bade surcease
 The cruel strife, and to confirm the peace
 From further fight recall'd each willing band,
 And stretch'd, in sign of peace, his naked hand. 445

Then thus to Gryphon—How shall I proclaim
 My sense of sorrow and repenting shame?
 Another's crime, with deep-concerted guile,
 Has led my erring judgment in the toil :
 What to the worst I deem'd was justly due, 450
 By me has wrong'd the best of knights in you.
 If late repentance can amends dispense,
 To heal the folly of my past offence,
 Behold me ready to repair the shame
 That lately sullied your illustrious name : 455
 Ask what thou wilt to crown thy high desert,
 Gold, cities, lands—my kingdom's better part,
 With these the tribute of a faithful heart. }
 All, all is thine—but stretch thy hand to prove
 The lasting pledge of amity and love. 460

He said, and ceasing, from his steed descends,
 And to the knight his better hand extends.
 Gryphon, who sees the king with eager pace
 Advance to meet him in a friend's embrace,

At once his anger and his sword resigns, 465
And low at Norandino's feet inclines
To clasp his knees: the king beholds him bleed
With late-got wounds, and summons at his need
A skilful leech, then bids with gentlest care
The wounded warrior to his palace bear. 470

But him we leave, of Aquilant to speak,
And bold Astolpho, left behind to seek
Unhappy Gryphon, whom the powerful call
Of love had drawn from Salem's hallow'd wall.
For many a day they sought, but sought in vain, 475
Nor find their comrade lost, nor tidings gain.
At length the pilgrim, who to Gryphon came,
They met, and learnt that Gryphon's faithless dame,
Won by another's love, had left in haste
The Syrian confines and to Antioch pass'd. 480
This when he heard, the sable warrior knew
That love had led his brother to pursue
His search from Judah's land, to win the charms
Of Origilla from a rival's arms.
But Aquilant who, with fraternal love 485
Could ill support that he alone should prove
Adventurous deeds, resolves with him to bear
His social arms, and every danger share.
But first he prays Astolpho to delay
(Till back from Antioch he resum'd his way) 490
His purpos'd journey to the Gallic strand,
Or pleasing voyage to his native land.

To Zaffa then he hastes a bark to take;
 By sea he deems his better speed to make.
 He mounts the deck; a south-east wind prevails, 495
 Curls the green wave and fills the favour'd sails.
 So swift their course before the prosperous breeze,
 Next day he Surro and Saffeto sees;
 Then Zibelletto and Barutti leaves,
 And distant Cyprus on the left perceives; 500
 From Tripoli to reach Tortosa speeds,
 To Lizzo and Laiazzo's gulph proceeds.
 Thence, veering to the east, the pilot guides
 The rapid vessel through the dashing tides.
 He comes where to the sea Orontes drives, 505
 And safely at the river's mouth arrives.
 Here Aquilant impatient, gives command
 To cast the bridge, and issues on the land.
 Arm'd on his steed his eager course he steers
 Along the stream, till Antioch's town appears. 510
 Nor Origilla nor Martano there
 The warrior finds, but hears the faithless pair
 To rich Damascus went the regal jousts to share. }
 Full sure he deem'd that Gryphon would pursue
 His perjurd dame, and hence in haste withdrew 515
 From Antioch's walls, resolv'd without delay
 To pass by land, nor risk the watery way;
 When God, to prove he oft allots below
 Good to the virtuous, to the wicked, woe;
 So guides his search, that on a certain day 520
 He met the vile Martano on the way:

.Ver. 508. *To cast the bridge,—*] The poet by this means a broad plank laid from the sides of the vessel to the shore for the horses to land.

Who bore before him, in proud triumph shown,
The prize of tilting by another won.

When Aquilant Martano first survey'd
In arms and vest of snow-white hue array'd, 525
He deem'd his brother near, and eager flew
To clasp his neck, but when advanc'd he knew
His fond mistake, he chang'd his first address,
And as he joy'd before, now fears no less.
He fears some fraud, by Origilla wrought, 530
Had to his end unhappy Gryphon brought.
Tell me (he cry'd) thou, whom thy looks proclaim
A thief and traitor, whence that armour came;
Whence is that garb, and why dost thou bestride
The generous steed that Gryphon wont to guide? 535
Say—lives my brother yet, or breathless lies?
How hast thou made his horse and arms thy prize?

Struck with his angry threats and dreadful sight,
Pale Origilla turns her steed for flight;
But sudden Aquilant has seiz'd the reins, 540
And in her own despite the dame retains.
Confus'd and mute, as leaves to zephyrs shake,
Martano seems in every limb to quake.
Still Aquilant in thundering accent raves,
While at his head the naked sword he waves, 545
And vows unless his lips the truth display,
The dame and he their forfeit lives shall pay.

Martano pondering long how best to hide
His crime with specious art, at length reply'd.

Lo! there my sister, mighty Sir, who came 550
From virtuous parents; of unsully'd name;
Till Gryphon long, regardless of her race,
Detain'd her in a life of foul disgrace:

Much have I sorrow'd for her hapless sake ;
But since too weak from such a knight to take 555
The helpless penitent, we sought t' obtain
By art what force could never hope to gain.
She, while he slept, from Gryphon's power withdrew ;
And lest he waking should our flight pursue,
We thence convey'd his vesture, arms, and steed, 560
And now in safety on our way proceed.

So hop'd th' impostor with a sister's name
To veil the lawless partner of his shame ;
But Aquilant, who heard her story spread
Through Antioch's town, and knew the life she led, 565
Enflam'd anew to wrath, indignant spoke :
False slave ! thou ly'st—then aim'd a ponderous stroke
With lifted arm and mailed gauntlet bent,
And down his throat two bleeding teeth he sent :
Then with strong cords he pinion'd close behind 570
His caitiff-arms, and with like bonds confin'd
His foul associate, while she strove t' assuage
With fruitless plea the warrior's generous rage,
Who bade the squires and all th' attending train,
With gifts enrich'd; Damascus' walls regain. 575

Thus journeying on through many a town, he brought
The shameless pair ; then in Damascus' sought
His brother lost, whose justice might dispense
The punishment for such unheard offence.
Arriv'd, he found that Gryphon's glorious fame 580
Was far diffus'd on rapid wings of fame.
Already old and young the tale could tell,
That this was he who ran at tilt so well ;
And he, from whom his partner's impious wiles
Had won the meed of arms and knightly toils. 585

The populace, enrag'd, Martano view,
And point him out, and with loud threats pursue.
Behold (they cry) the wretch, who seeks to raise
On other's actions his dissembled praise ;
Who sullies, with his own opprobrious shame, 590
The man who guards not well his better fame.
Yon woman see, with every vice indu'd,
Who aids the wicked, and betrays the good.
Some thus exclaim—How well the pair agree !
Not he more treacherous than deceitful she ! 595
With railing these, with curses those pursue
Their hateful way ; while, eager for a view,
Through streets and squares th' impatient vulgar throng,
Press on each other's steps and pour along.
With joy the king these tidings entertain'd, 600
With greater joy than for a kingdom gain'd ;
And with his few attendants eager press'd
To meet brave Aquilant, his welcome guest,
And pay such honors as to him belong'd
Whose valour had aveng'd his Gryphon wrong'd. 605
Now Norandino with the knight's consent,
Within a gloomy cell his captives pent.
But Aquilant he led, where (since the day
He bled in combat) wounded Gryphon lay ;
Who, when he view'd his brother, glow'd with shame
As conscious that he knew his sully'd fame, 611
With all that chanc'd : when Aquilant awhile
His love had rally'd with a friendly smile ;
They held debate what penance to impose
On them from whom such foul deceit arose. 615
Severe the king and Aquilant decreed
Their pains ; but Gryphon wish'd for her to plead :

Yet, since he blush'd to urge her cause alone,
He begg'd his pleading might for both atone.
At length 'twas doom'd (to end the friendly strife) 620
To scourge Martano, but to spare his life.
Next day they gave him to the hangman's hands,
Who bound his limbs, but not in flowery bands,
Then on the culprit many a lash bestow'd,
From street to street, amidst the gaping crowd. 625
But Origilla still they kept to mourn
In bonds till fair Lucina should return,
Whose sage decree (for so these lords ordain)
Her doom must lighten or enforce her pain.

Here Aquilant remain'd, till Gryphon heal'd 630
Of every wound his arms again could wield.
From errors past the king more prudent grown,
Believes he never can enough atone
For such misdeed, by which he brought to shame
A knight whose worth might every tribute claim. 635
Each day, each hour, he bent his care to chase
From Gryphon's mind the thoughts of late disgrace.
And soon he purpos'd in the public view,
With every honour to his merits due,
To give him to redeem his ravish'd spoils, 640
Where once he suffer'd by his comrade's wiles.

Now through the realms the regal mandate pass'd,
To form a joust more splendid than the last;
Within a month he bade the lists prepare
In all the pomp that fits a monarch's care. 645

Ver. 623.—*not in flowery bands,*] This may possibly allude to the verses of Petrarch, where, speaking of Julius Cæsar, he says, that Cleopatra bound him with flowery wreaths. *Fornari.*

Soon ready Fame her rapid wings expands,
 And spreads the tidings through the Syrian lands;
 Phœnicia, Palestine, the rumour hear,
 Which reach'd at length to good Astolpho's ear;
 Who, with the noble regent*, now inclin'd 650
 To see the lists by Syria's prince design'd.

Great was the praise of Sansonetto's name,
 Great was his strength in arms and knightly fame;
 Whom, made a Christian by Orlando's hand,
 Charles gave in charge to rule the holy land. 655

These valiant sons of chivalry, to meet
 The knights at Norandino's regal seat,
 From town to town pursu'd their easy way
 To reach the tilting on th' appointed day
 With vigour unimpair'd, and chanc'd to light 660
 (Where two paths join'd) on one who seem'd a knight;
 But one, whose outward vest and looks conceal'd
 A virgin glorious in the martial field.

Marphisa was her name, of generous strain,
 Who oft was known the combat to maintain 665
 With Brava's† mighty lord, and oft had clos'd
 With Mount Albano's‡, sword to sword oppos'd.
 By day, by night, in shining arms array'd,
 Through woods and dales, o'er hills and plains she stray'd

* Sansonetto.

† Orlando.

‡ Rinaldo.

Ver. 664. *Marphisa*.—] The character is continued from the Orlando Innamorato, where she makes a principal figure. Boyardo tells us that Galaphron, the father of Angelica, brought with him a numerous force to raise the siege of Albracca, among which was Marphisa, a female warrior of dauntless courage, and who had made a vow never to disarm herself till she had taken three kings prisoners in battle, Gradasso, Agrican, and Charlemain.

See *Orl. Innam.* B. i. c. xvi.

T' encounter wandering knights, and nobly raise 670
Victorious trophies of immortal praise.

As Sansonetto and Astolpho came
In plate and mail before the fearless dame,
She deem'd them warriors well in battle known,
For both were large of limb and strong of bone. 675
Then eager in the field their force to try,
She wheel'd her steed the strangers to defy,
But to her mind recall'd, as near she drew,
The Paladin whom in Cathay she knew,
Where oft she mark'd, in council and in fight, 680
The gallant bearing of the English knight.
This seen, the gauntlet from her hand she took,
Call'd him by name, and with a gracious look
Her beaver rais'd, nor, though the first in pride,
To meet the duke with fair salute deny'd ; 685
While the brave Paladin as gladly paid
His cordial greeting to the wondrous maid.

Now each began t' inquire the other's way ;
Astolpho first reply'd—his journey lay
To reach Damascus, where the Syrian king 690
Sought in his lists from various climes to bring
The bravest knights—Permit (Marphisa cry'd)
My arms with yours the glory to divide.
She said, and gladly to her wish they yield,
O'erjoy'd at such a partner in the field. 695

At length the day before the festive rite,
They see Damascus rising to their sight,

And here, without the walls, awhile they stay
 Till fair Aurora with her early ray
 Shall gild the morn; but when with ruddy blaze 700
 The sun began to shed his orient rays,
 The dame and knights their limbs in armour cas'd,
 And to the lists an envoy sent in haste,
 To give the signal when the jousts began,
 When spear with spear, and man engag'd with man.

Now to the place king Norandino came, 706
 The place he destin'd for the dangerous game;
 While the brave virgin*, and the knightly pair†,
 Press through the city to the crowded square,
 Where, waiting for the sign, on either hand 710
 The knights of noble strain impatient stand.
 The prizes doom'd that day for those who won,
 A glittering poll-ax, and a sword that shone
 With costly gems; with these the king bestow'd
 A steed, whose make and stately trappings show'd 715
 A royal gift—The king who surely held
 That he, who first had all opponents quell'd,
 Would win the second jousts, and bear away
 The meed and praise of each victorious day,
 To give him all that honour could demand, 720
 Those arms, which late by fraud Martano gain'd,
 Aloft he hung; the sword of temper try'd
 To these he join'd; and at the courser's side
 The poll-ax plac'd, all destin'd to requite
 Brave Gryphon, from his garb surnam'd the white. 725
 But she, who lately to the list of fame,
 With Sansonetto and Astolpho came,

* Marphisa.

† Sansonetto, and Astolpho.

Soon chang'd the scene—for when before her view
 These arms appear'd, full well the arms she knew,
 Which, once her own, the virgin treasur'd high, 730
 Their value such, no vulgar price could buy.
 These once impatient from her limbs she drew
 And cast aside, impetuous to pursue
 Brunello, vers'd in every art of theft,
 Who from her side the trusty sword had reft. 735
 Nor need I longer on the story dwell,
 Suffice how here she found her arms to tell.

Now when the maid, by certain tokens known,
 Again in these with joy confess'd her own,
 So dearly priz'd—No more in doubt she stay'd, 740
 But, swift advancing, on the cuirass laid
 That hand, which ne'er was wont in field to fail,
 And here she seiz'd, and there she strow'd the mail
 With headlong haste. The king incens'd beheld,
 And with a look his ready train impell'd 745
 T' avenge the deed: at once the train obey'd:
 The spear they rested and unsheath'd the blade,
 Mindless of what they found so late requite
 Their insult offer'd to a wandering knight.
 Not more, when Spring unlocks his genial stores 750
 The playful child delights in gaudy flowers:
 Not more the blooming maid, with vestments gay,
 In the swift dance or music's spritely lay;

Ver. 732. *These once impatient from her limbs she drew*

And cast aside,---] This story is told by Boyardo, who says that she pursued Brunello fifteen days, that on the sixth day her horse falling dead through weariness, she continued the pursuit on foot, till Brunello getting to the sea-side made his escape in a vessel, and arrived safe at Biserta with the spoils he had made.

Orl. Innam. B. ii. c. xvii.

Than she, whose valour every thought exceeds,
Joys in the clang of arms and neigh of steeds; 755
The rattling quiver, and the crashing spear,
Where streaming blood and ghastly death appear.
Her courser spurr'd against the thoughtless crew,
Her lance in rest with headlong speed she flew;
Some through the neck, some through the breast she
thrust, 760

Some with a shock she tumbled on the dust.
Then, with drawn sword, her furious strokes address'd,
She lopp'd the head or broke the brittle crest;
There pierc'd the side, and here the skull she cleft,
The right arm now she cropt, and now the left. 765
Brave Sansonetto and Astolpho bold
Who with Marphisa came the lists to hold,
Not mix in serious combat, when they saw
The Syrian troops in rank of battle draw,
At once their lances couch'd, their vizors clos'd, 770
And pierc'd th' ignoble herd, where few oppos'd
Their dreadful course: meantime the knights who came
From various realms, the candidates for fame,
Their sportive weapons turn'd to slaughter view'd,
And promis'd jousts to deeper scenes of blood; 775
Yet knew not why the Syrian people sought
Their mad revenge, or what offence had wrought
The king's resentment; hence, on either hand,
In deep amaze and speechless doubt they stand.

Some forward rush the people's cause to join, 780
But soon repent; and some, whose minds incline
On either part, to these as those unknown,
Prepare, without delay, to quit the town;

While wiser some, still hold the courser's rein, 785
And, silent, anxious for th' event remain.

But Aquilant and Gryphon flew where swarms
Of people pour'd to claim their sovereign's arms
So proudly seiz'd. When now the brethren view'd
The king, whose fiery eyes, suffus'd with blood,
Bespoke his wrath, when now at full they knew 790

The cause from which such dread contention grew;
And Gryphon deem'd such insult borne must shame
Not less his own, than Norandino's name;
Each bids his spear be brought with eager speed,
And flies to vengeance on his thundering steed. 795

On t'other part Astolpho swift impeil'd
His Rabicano, while in hand he held
The lance of gold, that with enchanted force
Dismounts each warrior in the listed course.

With this on earth two noble knights he leaves: 800
First Gryphon falls, then Aquilant receives
The weapon's point, that glancing on the shield,
The generous youth extended on the field.

Bold Sansonetto from their seats remov'd
The bravest knights, in many a conflict prov'd: 805
Swift from the barriers throng'd th' affrighted crowd:
The king, inflam'd with anger, storm'd aloud.

Meantime Marphisa, who had driven away
Whate'er oppos'd her (victor of the day)
The late contested arms in triumph took, 810
And with her prize the fatal lists forsook.

Ver. 798. *The lance of gold.*—] This lance, formerly the property of Argalia, after his death came to Astolpho.

See General View of *Boyardo's Story*.

Nor Sansonetto, nor Astolpho stay'd,
But to the gate pursu'd the martial maid,
While Aquilant and Gryphon mourn'd the chance
That both o'erthrew with one resistless lance. 815
O'erwhelm'd with shame they curse the stranger's hand,
Nor dare in Norandino's presence stand.
They seize their coursers, and their seats regain
To chase the foe—with numbers in his train
The king pursues——All equal fury breathe, 820
Resolv'd on vengeance or resolv'd on death.
The vulgar throngs applauding clamours send,
But gaze at distance and th' event attend.

Now Gryphon came to where the three had gain'd
The bridge, and undismay'd the post maintain'd: 825
Arriv'd, he soon Astolpho knew, who wore
The same device and vests he view'd before:
The same his armour and the same his steed,
As on the day he made Orilo bleed.

When Gryphon late engag'd the English knight, 830
The well-known marks at first escap'd his sight,
But now he knows him, greets him now with hands
Conjoin'd, and of his comrades' weal demands;
And why, regardless of the reverence due
To Syria's king, those arms to earth they threw. 835
To Gryphon then good Otho's son* reveal'd
His comrades' names, and nought beside conceal'd
Of what had chanc'd, though little could he tell
How from those arms such sudden discord fel;
But since himself and Sansonetto brought 840
Marphisa there, in her defence they fought.

* Astolpho.

While friendly thus they commun'd, nearer drew
Good Aquilant, and soon Astolpho knew:
His wrath subsides; and numbers now appear,
But dare not yet approach the warriors near: 845
They view each gesture well, and stand intent
To mark their words and what their parley meant:
When one, who found that this was she so fam'd
In glorious fields of fight, Marphisa nam'd,
His courser turn'd and Norandino warn'd, 850
(Unless he wish'd to see his honours scorn'd)
Ere all were slain, to save his remnant bands
From dire Tisiphonè and Death's remorseless hands;
For she, who thus had seiz'd the costly arms,
Was fierce Marphisa, bred amidst th' alarms 855
Of horrid war. When Norandino heard
That dreadful name through all the east so fear'd,
Unless his care prevent, full well he knew
The mischief, now predicted, must ensue.
For this he bids his troops from combat cease, 860
Whose fury lessens as their fears increase.

Meanwhile the sons of Olivero there,
With Sansonetto and with Otho's heir,
By mild intreaty in Marphisa's breast
Assuag'd the flame: she stay'd, at their request 865
Her deathful hand, then with a haughty look
Approaching Norandino thus she spoke.

I know not why your victor should receive
These arms, O king! which are not yours to give.
These once were mine, and midst the public way 870
That from Armenia leads, one fateful day
I left behind, with better speed to chase
A wretch from whom I suffer'd foul disgrace;

Behold this token on the mail imprest,
The certain proof of what my lips attest. 875

Then on the cuirass, which she claim'd her own,
Cleft in three parts she shew'd a regal crown.

Ver. 874. *Behold this token on the mail imprest,*] Boyardo relates that Marphisa bore for the device on her shield a crown cleft in three parts, and for her crest a dragon vomiting flames.

Nel scudo azurro avea per devisa
Una corona in tre parti spezzata :
La cotta d'arme a quella guisa
E la coperta tutto lavorato,
E per cimier nel piu sublime loco,
Un drago verde che gettava foco,
Ed era il foco acconcia di maniera,
Che dal impeto accesa arde del vento,
E quando in mezza alla battaglia ell'era,
Un lampeggiar facea pien di spavento.

Berni Orl. Inn. B. I. C. x.

She, for device, upon her azure shield,
Cleft in three parts a regal crown reveal'd;
The like impress her mailed cuirass bore,
And all her surcoat rich embroider'd o'er :
High on her helm, in figur'd terror grac'd,
A verdant dragon fiery sparkles cast;
The towering crest, by wondrous art design'd,
With motion glow'd and kindled in the wind :
And while amidst the mingled fight she turn'd,
With dreaded blaze the fire increasing burn'd!

Tasso paints the crest of the Soldan of Egypt in the same manner.

A dragon on his crest the Soldan wore,
That, stretching, bends his arching neck before,
High on his feet he stands, with spreading wings,
And wreaths his forky tail in spiry rings:
Three brandish'd tongues the sculptur'd monster shows,
He seems to kindle as the combat glows:
His gaping jaws appear to hiss with ire,
And vomit mingled smoke and ruddy fire.

Jerusal. Del. B. ix. ver. 193.

Four days are past, since from th' Armenian land
 (The king reply'd) a merchant to my hand
 This armour brought, and would'st thou this obtain, 880
 Think not thy tongue shall ask the gift in vain;
 Nor think, whate'er thy claim, the prize ordain'd
 For Gryphon's virtues, thus by him detain'd,
 But freely would his noble mind resign
 The victor's meed to make thy friendship mine. 885
 No signs I ask to prove this armour yours,
 Your word, your valour, my belief secures.
 Now take thy own—here all contention leave,
 And Gryphon shall from me a richer gift receive.
 Gryphon, who little had these arms desir'd, 890
 But still in all to please the king aspir'd,
 Thus made reply—For me it shall suffice,
 That aught you wish my glad consent supplies.
 Marphisa, who beheld the part they took
 To save her honour, with benignant look 895

Both these descriptions originate in the following fine picture of Virgil.

..... Turnus

Vertitur arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est,
 Quod triplici crinita juba galea alta Chimæram
 Sustinet, Ætnæos efflantem faucibus ignes.
 Tam magis illa fremens, ac tristibus effera flammis,
 Quam magis effuso crudescunt sanguine pugnae.

Æn. lib. vii. ver. 783.

..... Turnus rode,

A triple pile of plumes his crest adorn'd,
 On which with belching flames Chimera burn'd;
 The more the kindled combat rises higher,
 The more with fury burns the blazing fire.

Dryden, ver. 1071.

To Gryphon begg'd these arms her gift to make,
Which Gryphon at her hand vouchsaf'd to take.

Now to the city all again pursu'd
Their cheerful way, in peace and love renew'd;
Where at the festive tilt in splendor run, 900
The prize and glory Sansonetto won.

Astolpho and the brethren fam'd in war,
But chief Marphisa, brave beyond compare,
With friendly purpose from the list abstain,
That Sansonetto all the praise might gain. 905

With Norandino thus the knights employ
The happy days in sports and social joy,
Till now the state of France by foes oppress,
Awakes new thoughts in every knightly breast:
Their leave they take: with these, by glory fir'd, 910
Marphisa went, for long her soul aspir'd
To meet the Paladins in fields of fame,
And prove if each deserv'd so great a name.

Another Sansonetto leaves, whose sway
For his might blest Jerusalem obey: 915
Then in one friendly band together join'd,
These five, whose equals scarce the world can find,
Dismiss'd by Norandino seek the land
Of Tripoli, where on the neighbouring strand
The billows break, and where a bark they find 920
With wealthy freight for western climes design'd.
An aged pilot there (the terms agreed)
Receives aboard each warrior and his steed.

With cloudless beam serenely shone the day,
The flattering promise of a prosperous way. 925
The shore forsaking, with a favouring gale
They plough the deep with wide extended sail.

The isle devoted to the queen of love,
 Receives them first, within whose port they prove
 Malignant steams of pestilential breath 930

That soften steel and taint the air with death.
 Sent from a stagnant pool—and thus unkind
 To Famagosta, Nature has assign'd
 Her place so near Constanzo's noxious soil,
 Yet blest in other parts the Cyprian isle: 935

The poisonous fumes forbid the ship to stay;
 Around the coast they wing their rapid way,
 And steering to the right, at Paphos moor:
 The sailors issue on the flowery shore,
 For traffic some, and some the land to view, 940
 Where Love resides with pleasures ever new.

Six miles ascending gently from the flood,
 Stands on a beauteous hill a verdant wood,
 Where cedars, myrtles, bays, and orange grow,
 With various plants that grateful scent bestow. 945

Wild thyme, the lily, crocus, and the rose
 Perfume the air, while every wind that blows
 Fresh from the land, far o'er the surge main
 Wafts the sweet gale to greet the sailor-train.
 Clear from a spring a murmuring riv'let pours 950

Its winding tribute to the meads and flowers.
 Well may this spot be nam'd the favourite soil
 Of lovely Venus, where with roseate smile,
 Each dame, each virgin shines in bloomy pride
 Of charms unequal'd through the world beside, 955

Ver. 930. *Malignant steams*.—] The lake of Constanza is so near Famagosta, that it was said to render the air pestilential: but the further effects attributed to it by the poet are probably exaggerated.

While the soft goddess youth and age inspires,
And even in life's last stage maintains her amorous fires.

Here was the tale confirm'd, reveal'd but late
Of fair Lucina, whom in doleful state
The orc detain'd; and soon the news they heard, 960
That, freed at length from bonds, the princess steer'd
Her happy journey from Nicosia's seat,
In Syria's realm her long-lost lord to meet.

The pilot now his voyage to pursue,
While o'er the wave the favouring breezes blew, 965
Turn'd to the sea his prow, his anchor weigh'd,
And every canvas to the gale display'd.
Now distant from the port the vessel stood,
And plough'd with happy speed the briny flood,
Long as the sun above th' horizon shin'd; : 970
But, when black evening rose, the changing mild
How'd thro' the shrouds, and from the lowest deep
With warring waves assail'd the reeling ship.
Wide yawns the firmament from pole to pole,
Quick flash the lightnings, loud the thunders roll; 975
Thick clouds in darkness veil th' ethereal light,
Nor sun by day, nor star appears by night.
South, east, and west in rattling whirlwinds blow;
Heaven groans above and ocean roars below.
Huge cataracts descend of hail and rain; 980
The wretched sailors every woe sustain,
And horror broods upon the angry main.

Ver. 962. — *Nicosia*.—] Nicosia was a city almost in the middle of the island of Cyprus.

Ver. 963. — *her long-lost lord to meet*.] Here concludes the story of Norandino and Lucina, who appear no more in the course of this work.

All ply their several tasks to prove how well
Each in his office can the rest excel.

One with his whistle's sound the want of speech 985

Supplies, and gives the needful charge to each:

This, at the anchor toils; that, strikes the sails;

This strains or loosens, as the storm prevails,

The creaking cordage; that, the deck ascends:

The rudder this, and that, the mast defends. 990

All night the storm redoubled rage display'd,

With thicker gloom than heli's tremendous shade.

Through deepest seas th' affrighted pilot steer'd,

Where through the waves no dangerous shelves appear'd,

Not hopeless yet but with returning day 995

Relentless fortune might her wrath allay:

In vain his hopes—for nought her wrath assuag'd,

By day with fiercer strength the tempest rag'd:

If that were day, which not returning light,

But lapse of hours distinguish'd from the night. 1000

Now pale, despairing, to his fate resign'd,

The pilot leaves his vessel to the wind:

He lets her drive where'er the storm prevails,

And ploughs the un pitying sea with humble sails.

While fortune these upon the deep distress'd, 1005

Not more she suffers those at land to rest,

Where on the plains of France, with dreadful rage,

1010 The Christian and the Pagan powers engage.

Rinaldo there assails, breaks, scatters round

The foes, and hurls their standards to the ground: 1010

And now he spurs Bayardo through the fight,

To prove the noble Dardinello's might.

Rinaldo on his shield the sign survey'd,
Which young Almontes' son with pride display'd,
And deem'd him brave whose venturous arm could bear
The same device the earl* was seen to wear; 1015
And found him brave, when round the ghastly plain
He saw the heaps his conquering hand had slain.
Then to himself—This noxious weed demands,
(Ere yet it further spreads) my pruning hands. 1020
Thus spoke the knight, and where he turns his face,
The ranks recede, and every chief gives place:
Christians and Pagans to his passage yield,
Such awe his looks, such dread his sword impell'd.
But hapless Dardinello sole defies 1025
Albano's chief; to whom Rinaldo cries.

Poor boy! in evil hour to risk thy life,
That shield was left, thy pledge of future strife:
I come to prove how well with me in fight,
Thy hand defends that ensign red and white: 1030
If here thou fail'st, thy force can ill contend
Those arms against Orlando to defend.

Then Dardinello thus—Hear one who dares
Protect those honours which in field he bears:
I trust these colours, red and white, proclaim 1035
Less pledge of strife than pledge of future fame:
Think not, though young, to make me fly the field,
Or e'er to thee this glorious trophy yield.
My death alone on thee my arms bestows:
But Heaven th' event far other may dispose; 1040
And never, never shall my deeds disgrace
The lineal praise of my illustrious race.

He said; and as he spoke, with brandish'd sword
 Intrepid rush'd on Mount Albano's lord:
 A chilling fear each Pagan foe oppress'd, 1045
 And froze the blood in every panting breast;
 When stern Rinaldo, eager for the fight,
 Resistless flew t' engage the blooming knight.
 A lion thus (that in the pasture views
 A bull that ne'er the heifer yet pursues) 1050
 Springs on his prey—first aim'd the Pagan foe
 Against Mambrino's helm the fruitless blow.
 Now learn (with smile severe Rinaldo cry'd)
 If this right hand can best the weapon guide.
 At once he spurr'd, and to the fiery horse 1055
 Gave up the reins, when driv'n with matchless force
 Through his white breast the sword a passage found,
 Till at his back appear'd the grizzly wound.
 The steel drawn forth, drew forth the vital breath,
 And cold and pale the body sunk in death. 1060
 Like some fair flower, whose vivid lustre fades,
 If chance the ploughman's share its stâlk invades;

Ver. 1045. *A chilling fear —*] So Virgil when Pallas attacks Turnus, *Æneid* x.

Frigidus Arcadibus coit in præcordia sanguis.
 The blood congeal'd in each Arcadian heart.

Ver. 1061. *Like some fair flower—*] Thus Virgil, *Æneid* ix. ver. 435.

Purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
 Languescit moriens; lassove papavera collo,
 Demisere caput, pluvia cum forte gravantur.

As a gay flower, with blooming beauties crown'd,
 Cut by the share, lies languid on the ground;
 Or some tall poppy that o'er-charg'd with rain,
 Bends the faint head, and sinks upon the plain.

Or heavy poppies, charg'd with dews or rain,
 That hang their heads low drooping on the plain :
 So from his face the rosy colour flies, 1065
 So Dardinello sinks, and sinking dies :
 He dies, and instant with their chief is fled
 The strength, the courage of the host he led.
 As where huge works of human art restrain
 The floods that else would deluge all the plain, 1070
 Whene'er the mounds are burst, the rushing tide
 With roaring noise escapes on every side.
 The powers of Afric thus, who scorn'd to yield,
 While Dardinello's name inspir'd the field ;
 Soon as they found the leader breathless lie, 1075
 Dispers'd and broken o'er the plains they fly,
 Who seeks to fly, Rinaldo leaves in flight,
 But those assails who bravely meet the fight.
 What numbers fell where Ariodantes fought,
 Who next Rinaldo deeds of prowess wrought ! 1080
 These Lionetto ; those Zerbino quell'd ;
 All seem'd to strive who most in arms excell'd.
 Charles, mindful of his fame, the battle wag'd :
 There Olivero, Turpin, Guido rag'd ;
 There Salamone fought, Ugero there engag'd. 1085 }
 That day so fatal to each Moorish band,
 Had left not one to see his native land ;
 But sage Marsilius, with foreseeing care,
 Preserv'd th' unhappy remnants of the war ;
 And better deem'd these wretched bands to save, 1090
 Than suffer all to fill a foreign grave.

Ver. 1084. ----*Guido*.---] Two Guidos are mentioned by the poet, distinct from one of that name called Guido Savage.

He sends his standards to the camp, dispos'd
 Against assaults, by fencing works enclos'd :
 Here Stordilano came, Granada's king ;
 Andalusia's, Lusus' leaders bring 1095
 Their suffering powers : meantime Marsilius sends
 To Afric's monarch ; and with speed commends
 To quit the field, and thank the favouring power
 Which sav'd his life in that destroying hour.

The king, who saw that nothing could restore 1100
 The day, nor hop'd to see Biserta more,
 The fate he could not shun resign'd to meet,
 His standards turn'd and bade to sound retreat.
 Such was the panic of the routed host,
 That flying numbers in the scene were lost. 1105
 King Agramant and sage Sobrino try'd
 The rest in order from the field to guide :
 But here nor king, nor sage, nor chief prevail'd
 With prayer or threat, such fear each breast assail'd :
 While scarce a third the standards would pursue, 1110
 That ill attended from the fight withdrew.
 For one that heard his chief or trumpet's call,
 Lo ! two were seen to fly, or two to fall.

Soon to their camp retir'd, in dire dismay,
 The wretched Pagans in their trenches lay : 1115
 When Charles, who meant not Fortune should be lost,
 Pursu'd the flying foe with all his host,
 But rising night his glorious ardor stay'd,
 And wrapt the warring world in friendly shade ;
 Perchance by Heaven more swiftly sent, to give 1120
 The creatures of his hand to breathe and live.

The hostile blood in purple torrents flow'd,
 And drench'd the soil with dreadful carnage strow'd ;

Where fourscore thousand on the fatal plain
Lay breathless by the murderous weapon slain, 1125
Whose bodies thieves and wolves at midnight hour
Rush'd from their haunts to pillage and devour.

No more imperial Charles to Paris turn'd,
But pitch'd his tents without, where kindled burn'd
The frequent fires: the foes besieg'd, with care 1130
Sink deep the trenches and the works repair,
O'erwatch the whole, bid every guard awake,
Nor all the live-long night their arms forsake.

The Saracens, whom chilling fears oppress,
Along their mournful lines in deep distress, 1135
Lament and weep, while half conceal'd and low,
The sighs break forth and hush'd the sorrows flow.
Some for their slaughter'd friends or kindred groan,
Some, others' sufferings; some bewail their own;
And some, more wretched, with foreboding mind 1140
Revolve still greater evils yet behind.

Two Moorish youths there were of humble race,
In Ptolomita was their native place:

Ver. 1142. *Two Moorish youths* —] This beautiful episode of Cloridano and Medoro, though evidently a copy of Nisus and Euryalus in the ninth Æneid, must be allowed to be improved by the motive which the poet ascribes for this midnight excursion of the two friends, the desire of recovering the body of their slaughtered master. It may be observed too, that in Virgil the attempt of exploring the enemy's camp is first suggested by Nisus, and that the young Euryalus takes fire at the proposal; but in Ariosto the youth is the first mover, instigated by love and gratitude to his dead prince; which circumstance greatly elevates his character, and adds to the pathos of the story. Ariosto has not only imitated Virgil, but probably had his eye upon Statius, who in the tenth book of the Thebaid, represents two of his heroes, Hopleus and Damas, making a search by night for the dead bodies of their kings Tydeus and Parthenopæus. The episode of Argantes and Clorinda, in the twelfth

Whose story told to every ear may prove
 A rare example of unblemish'd love. 1145
 These, Cloridano and Medoro call'd,
 Firm in good times, in evil unappall'd,
 To Dardinello loyal friendship bore,
 And late with him had crost from Afric's shore.
 A hunter's life bold Cloridano led, 1150
 His limbs robust to strength and swiftness bred:
 Medoro's opening youth but scarce began
 To shade the rose with down and promise man.
 Of all that join'd the Pagan's threatening arms,
 Not one excell'd his mien and blooming charms: 1155
 Black were his eyes, his locks like golden-wire;
 So seems some angel of the heavenly choir!

book of the Jerusalem, may be derived from the Latin: but both Ariosto and Tasso have so varied the circumstances, and improved the hints they have taken, and in particular have given so different a turn to the conclusion of their adventure, that their separate fictions may nearly claim the merit of invention. At least in both poets, the imitations are the imitations of a master. I shall leave the reader to compare the passages which our poet has borrowed from Virgil.

I am happy to add here the observation of an elegant and candid critic on this passage of Ariosto. "The beautiful and pathetic tale of the two friends Medoro and Cloridano, in the eighteenth Canto of the Orlando Furioso, is indeed an artful and exact copy of the Nisus and Euryalus of Virgil; yet the author hath added some original beauties to it, and in particular hath assigned a more interesting motive for this midnight excursion, than what we find in Virgil; for Medoro and Cloridano venture into the field of battle to find out among the heaps of slain, the body of their lord. This perhaps is one of the most excellent passages in this wild and romantic author, who yet abounds in various beauties, the merit of which ought not to be tried by the established rules of classical criticism."

See Postscript to Dr. Warton's Edition of Virgil.

These two, with numbers more, by chance ordain'd
To guard the fences, now the watch maintain'd,
What time the drowsy night, with winking eyes, 1160
View'd from her middle throne the spangled skies.

Medoro still (while tears his cheeks suffuse)
The dear remembrance of his lord renews:
Almontes' son, brave Dardinello slain,
Expos'd unburied on the naked plain: 1165
When, turning to his friend, he thus express'd
The generous feelings of a loyal breast.

Shall he, O Cloridano, to the brood
Of wolves and ravens yield too precious food?
He, whose past goodness ever must awake 1170
My grateful love, till life this frame forsake?
And, ah! should life for him in tribute flow,
Not all could pay the mighty debt I owe!
Then to yon heaps of carnage let me fly,
Where cold on earth his limbs dishonour'd lie. 1175
Who knows but heaven may guide my daring tread
To where the silent camp of Charles is spread?
Remain thou here, that if resistless fate
Decrees my death, thou may'st that death relate:
And should not Heaven my pious vows succeed, 1180
At least posterity will praise the deed.

With speechless wonder Cloridano hears
Such faith and courage in such early years;
And (for he held him dear) he strives to make
The dauntless youth his rash design forsake. 1185
But grief, like his, no comfort can controul;
Nor reason change the purpose of his soul,
A grave on Dardinello to bestow,
Or in the great attempt his life forego.

When Cloridano long in vain had try'd 1190
Each friendly plea—Yet let me share (he cry'd)
The pious task—I too aspire to raise
From such a death the meed of endless praise.
Should I, depriv'd of thee, Medoro, live,
What future joy can wretched being give? 1195
Ah! let me meet with thee a soldier's fate,
Nor drag behind life's wretched lingering state.

This said; they point supplies their place to take,
Then leave the trenches and the camp forsake;
And soon arrive where, sunk in heavy sleep, 1200
Our careless bands the watch no longer keep:
Their fires extinct, each senseless at his post,
But little fears the Pagan's neighbouring host:
Midst arms, and cars, and coursers stretch'd supine
In slumber lock'd and drench'd in fumes of wine. 1205
His steps awhile here Cloridano stay'd:
Shall I not seize the present hour (he said)
Now, now, Medoro, on you hostile train
To wreak some vengeance for my patron slain?
Here listen thou! and watch with heedful eye, 1210
Lest unawares some waking foe descry
Our bold attempt, while here my wrath I slake,
And through the camp our bloody passage make.

He said; and ceasing, o'er the trenches stept,
And first he came where learn'd Alpheus slept: 1215
But late th' imperial court of Charles he sought,
In magic, herbs, and arts prophetic taught:
Here fail'd his skill, that skill so oft believ'd;
While to himself, the witless seer deceiv'd,
Long years of life had promis'd, safe from harms, 1220
And death at last in his lov'd consort's arms.

Deep in his throat the wily Pagan sent
 His weapon's point; and next his fury bent
 On four that speechless dy'd, whose names unknown
 No Turpin to our age delivers down. 1225
 Then Palidon of Moncaliri bleeds,
 Who slept secure between the harness'd steeds.
 At length he came to where, supinely spread,
 An empty vase supported Grillo's head :
 Himself had swill'd the wine, and now he lay 1230
 In peaceful rest to doze the fumes away :
 Large measures had he quaff'd, and still extends
 In dreams the draught which Cloridano ends.
 A Greek and Belgian perish'd near his side,
 Who long, by night the dice and goblet ply'd. 1235
 Thrice happy ! had they ply'd till reddening morn
 From silver Indus made her wish'd return.
 But Fate would lose on earth his sovereign power
 Could man with prescience read the future hour.
 As the gaunt lion, at the savage call 1240
 Of hunger, overleaps the nightly stall ;
 Then kills, and rends the sheep with cruel paws,
 To glut with bloody food his ravenous jaws :
 The Pagan thus, amidst our senseless crew
 Innumers'd in slumber, helpless wretches slew : 1245
 Nor yet he rag'd with bold Medoro's steel,
 Who scorn'd that vulgar lives his force should feel.
 He came where duke Labretto lay enclos'd /
 By his lov'd consort's arms, in sleep repos'd : /

Ver. 1237. — — *silver Indus* —] A principal river in the East Indies, which gives name to the whole country of India.

Ver. 1248. — — *where duke Labretto lay enclos'd*

By his lov'd consort's arms—] This pathetic incident is

No air could glide between, so close they lay, 1250
Medoro's falchion lopt their heads away :

O envy'd death ! for sure their souls conjoin'd
In like embrace, one happy stroke consign'd
To those blest regions to receive above

The meed of joy and never-dying love ! 1255

Malindo next he slew : and at his side,
Brave Ardelico and his brother dy'd,

The sons of Flanders' earl, whom lately prais'd

For martial virtue, Charles had newly rais'd

To knighthood's rank, and either gave to hold, 1260

Mix'd with their arms, the fleur-de-lys of gold.

These from the field that glorious day he view'd

Return with weapons stain'd in hostile blood,

And promis'd each in Friza large domain :

But soon Medoro made such promise vain ! 1265

Thus slaughtering on, advanc'd th' insidious two,

At length they near the rich pavilions drew,

Where round the tent of Charles, in arms prepar'd,

The Paladins, by turn, maintain'd the guard.

Here from their bloody work the Pagans ceas'd, 1270

And sheath'd their falchions and their steps repress'd ;

For well they deem'd that midst so vast a host,

Not all could sleep regardless of their post.

What wealthy plunder thence might each have borne,

But all they sought was safely to return ! 1275

First Cloridano led the way, to find

Their surest track ; his friend pursu'd behind.

At length they came where in a field of blood,

With falchions, bows, and shields, and lances strow'd,

not borrowed from Virgil, but our author's own, and unequalled by any death described in the expedition of Nisus and Euryalus.

Men mix'd with steeds, the poor with wealthy lay,
 And kings with slaves reduc'd to common clay. 1281
 Th' unnumber'd slain had made the pious pair
 Pursue their search till day with fruitless care;
 But, at Medoró's suit, the moon reveal'd
 Her silver horns till then in clouds conceal'd: 1285
 Fix'd on the sky he bent his mournful sight,
 And thus address'd the regent of the night.

O sacred empress! by our fathers fam'd!
 Who rightly thee their triple goddess nam'd!
 Thou, who in heaven, in earth, or deepest hell, 1290
 Through various forms in glory canst excel!
 Who wear'st a huntress' garb in woods to trace
 The haunts of monsters and the sylvan race;
 Show me my murder'd lord in blood imbru'd,
 Who, while he liv'd, thy hallow'd sports pursu'd. 1295

At this, by chance, or at his earnest prayer,
 The moon resplendent through the vaporous air
 Pierc'd the still gloom; as when in virgin charms
 She came all naked to Endymion's arms.
 Paris with either camp receiv'd the beam: 1300
 The plains and mountains whiten'd in the gleam:
 Martir and Liri's distant hills were bright,
 This rising to the left, and that the right:
 But rays more dazzling mark'd the fatal plain
 Where lay Almontes' valiant offspring slain. 1305

Ver. 1304. *But rays more dazzling mark'd the fatal plain,
 Where lay Almontes'...*] This beautiful passage is finely
 copied by Tasso, where the Dane gives an account to Godfrey of
 his discovering the body of Sweno by moon-light.

Then from the peaceful regent of the night,
 I saw descend a ray of slanting light:

Him by his arms and shield's device he knew ;
 As near his lord Medoro weeping drew,
 With face all bath'd in tears, in tears which shed
 From either eye, eternal fountains fed :
 Such were his looks, so seem'd his plaints to flow, 1310
 That passing winds might listen to his woe.
 In accents low and murmurs scarcely heard
 He breath'd his grief; yet think not that he fear'd
 To risk a being he no longer priz'd ;
 His generous soul such abject thoughts despis'd ; 1315
 But most he fear'd some evil chance to find
 T' obstruct the pious deed his soul design'd.
 Now, on their shoulders laid, the friendly pair
 The breathless corse, with zeal divided, bear,
 Both pale and anxious for their dearest care. 1320 }

Soon came the God who gives to day its birth,
 The stars to chase from Heaven, the shades from earth ;
 When brave Zerbino, from whose virtuous breast
 A general's duty drove ignoble rest,
 Whose arm had chas'd the fearful Moors by night, 1325
 Return'd to seek the camp at dawn of light ;
 With him a band of knights—these soon beheld
 The distant friends that mov'd along the field
 With tardy steps: each warrior thither bent
 His course, to share the spoil that chance had sent.
 Now, now my brother ! cast our load aside, 1331
 And urge our swiftness (Cloridano cry'd)
 'Twere far unmeet, while from the deathful plain
 We bear one corse, two living should be slain.

Where on the field the breathless corse was laid,
 There full the lunar beam resplendent play'd.

Jerus. Deliv. B. viii. v. 229.

This said, he quits his hold, nor doubts to make 1335
His friend Medoro now th' attempt forsake ;
But he, whose pious love more firm remain'd,
The whole dear burden by himself sustain'd.
Meanwhile the first his feet for safety ply'd,
And deem'd his lov'd Medoro at his side. 1340

O ! had he known that then with foes enclos'd
He left his friend to cruel fate expos'd,
A thousand dangers would his arm have prov'd
To save the youth whom more than life he lov'd.
The horse, determin'd these should die or yield, 1345
Some here, some there dispersing o'er the field,
Cut off the means of flight : their leader near
Enflames their zeal : by every mark of fear,
By every semblance, well observ'd, he knew
That these were warriors of the hostile crew. 1350

Not far remote an ancient forest stood,
Perplex'd with thickening trees and dwarfish wood,
Where not a track the tangled paths display'd,
But foot of beasts that trod the gloomy shade:
Thither the Pagans fled, in hope to meet 1355
Amid the friendly boughs a safe retreat.

But he who gives my tale a willing ear
Must, at some future time, the sequel hear.



THE
NINETEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE ARGUMENT.

CONTINUATION of the episode of Cloridano and Medoro. Angelica finds Medoro wounded; she cures his wound, and becomes enamoured of him. Their marriage. Sansonetto, Astolpho, Gryphon, Aquilant, and Marphisa, are near being shipwrecked in a dreadful storm. They are cast at length on the land of the Amazons. The strange law there instituted. The lot falls on Marphisa to enter the list for her companions. Description of the battle between her and nine champions of the Amazons: She kills them all, and afterwards engages with the tenth, till night puts an end to the combat, which had been fought on both sides with equal valour.

THE
NINETEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

NONE see the heart, while plac'd in prosperous state
On Fortune's wheel, such numbers round them wait
Of true and seeming friends; when these no less
By looks declare that faith, which those possess.
But should to fair succeed tempestuous skies, 5
Behold how soon each fawning suppliant flies!
While he who truly lov'd, unmov'd remains,
And to his patron dead his love maintains,
O! did the features give sincere report,
How oft would those, who shine amidst a court 10
In pride of rank, who hold their prince's grace,
Change with their peers oppress an envy'd place!

Ver. 5. *But should to fair succeed tempestuous skies.*] -

So Ovid,

Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos,
Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.

Trist. Lib. i. Eleg. viii.

When Fortune smiles, thou seest surrounding friends;
When clouds arise, each boasted friendship ends!

The lowest name might then be lifted high,
The greatest midst the crowd degraded lie.
But let us to Medoro turn, who prov'd 15
His faith to him in life and death belov'd.

For safety now the generous youth pursu'd
The paths bewilder'd with entangling wood,
But the dear load he labour'd to sustain,
Made every hope t' escape pursuers vain ; 20
While thence far distant, from the burthen freed,
His friend in safety fled with happier speed.
Soon Cloridano came to where his ear
No more the sound of trampling horse could hear :
But when he miss'd his friend--What chance (he cry'd)
Could from myself my better self divide? 26
Thee could I leave, who late wert wont to share
My nearest thoughts? Is this my pious care?
Unknowing when or where, from thee I part,
Friend of my choice and brother of my heart! 30

He said: and speaking, through the winding shade
The track reprinted he before had made :
Sought what he left, and swift with panting breath
Returning trod the way that led to death.
He hears the foes, he hears the coursers' noise, 35
And nearer hears the riders' threatening voice ;
And, ah ! too late his dear Medoro knows,
Whom helpless and on foot a hundred horse enclose.
This troop Zerbino leads, who gives command
To seize the youth ; he, prest on every hand, 40
Wheels here and there, while all his thought he bends
To save his charge, and still his charge defends.
By turns he lurks beyond the Christians' reach
Behind some sheltering elm, or oak, or beech.

B. XIX. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 57

At length, unable longer to sustain 45

His honour'd load, he lays it on the plain,
Still hovering near—so when in mountain shades,
The hunter-troop a bear's retreat invades;
Around her young the savage mother howls
In dreadful anguish and with fury growls; 50
While inbred strength impels her oft to fly
On the bold foe, and deep in carnage dye
Her reeking jaws, maternal love restrains
Her rage, and with her cubs the beast detains.

Now Cloridano hopeless how to lend 55
His wanted aid, yet fix'd to join his friend
In life or death, and ere he clos'd his date,
Resolv'd that more than one should share his fate,
Swift for his bow he chose the pointed reed,
And took conceal'd his aim with bloody speed: 60
It reach'd a Scot, and, buried in his brain,
Hurl'd from his saddle, lifeless to the plain.

At once the Christians turn'd with anxious view,
Exploring whence the murderous weapon flew:
Mean time another by the Pagan sent, 65
With equal aim to pierce the second went,
Who, while he loud inquir'd what unseen hand-
Had drawn the bow, and rav'd amid the band,
The hissing dart drove on, his weazon cleft,
And while he spoke his tongue of speech bereft. 70

No more their chief Zerbino now repell'd
Th' indignant wrath, that in his bosom swell'd,
But rushing on Medoro—Thou shalt bear
The guilt—he cry'd, then seiz'd his golden hair,
And with strong grasp the hapless stripling drew 75
To meet the vengeance to another due,
Whose hostile shaft the Scots ill-fated slew.

Then, fixing on his face an earnest look,
 Soft pity kindled and forbade the stroke,
 As thus the youth his pitying grace implor'd : 80
 O ! by that God, in Christian lands ador'd !
 Steel not thy heart, Sir knight ! but let me pay
 The last sad honours to this sacred clay :
 I ask not life—O ! give me but to breathe
 Till to his tomb my sovereign I bequeath. 85
 But, if with Theban Creon's rage indu'd,
 Thou seek'st to glut each bird and beast with food,
 Be these poor limbs their prey, but hence convey'd
 Let first Almontes' son in earth be laid.

Medoro thus his moving suit address'd, 90
 In words to pierce the most obdurate breast ;
 Zerbino soon, his wrath decreasing, felt
 His manly soul with love and pity melt ;
 When lo ! a knight, by brutal fury sway'd,
 Who little reverence to his leader paid, 95
 While yet he spoke, the ruthless spear address'd
 Against the tender suppliant's youthful breast.
 With fierce displeasure good Zerbino view'd
 Th' inhuman stroke, but more when drench'd in blood
 He saw the youth lie senseless on the plain, 100
 That each, who saw his fall, believ'd him slain.
 Thou shalt not perish unreveng'd (he said)
 And sudden turn'd upon th' offender's head
 To wreak the deed ; but wheeling round, the knight
 His courser spurr'd and urg'd his rapid flight. 105

Ver. 86. *But, if with Theban Creon's rage indu'd*] Statius, in the twelfth book of his *Thebaid*, sets forth, that Creon published an edict forbidding the bodies of the enemy to be interred.

When Cloridano, where he stood conceal'd,
Beheld Medoro prostrate on the field,
He left the covert, cast aside the bow,
And rush'd in frantic rage amidst the foe,
With lifted weapon to revenge his death, 110
Or with Medoro yield his latest breath.

At length amidst such numerous swords he found
His gushing blood distain the purple ground;
Till life, fast ebbing with the vital tide,
He sunk contented by Medoro's side. 115 ✓

The Scots then follow'd where their chief they view'd,
Who through the woods his angry way pursu'd.
Behind remain'd the Pagans, one depriv'd
Of life's last breath, and one who scarce surviv'd.

Long time in helpless state Medoro lay 120

While life fast flow'd in purple streams away.

When, sent by Fortune to his timely aid,

A damsel came in cottage weeds array'd: 121 X 11, 11, 12, 13, 14

Of humble garb! but of a form most rare,

Of courteous manners and majestic air. 125

Perchance your mem'ry scarce recalls to mind,

(So long unsung) this loveliest of her kind;

Angelica, through every region known,

The heiress of Cathay's imperial throne.

When fair Angelica had now regain'd ✓ 130 ✓

Her ring which false Brunello late detain'd,

Alone she went, and fill'd with sorn and pride,

Disdain'd the noblest warrior for her guide:

Ver. 117.—his angry way pursu'd.] The account of Zerbino is resumed in Book xx. ver. 855.

Ver. 130. When fair Angelica—] The last we heard of Angelica was in book xii. ver. 438.

She blush'd to think that, midst her lovers nam'd,
Orlando or king Sacripant had claim'd 135
Her least regard, but most her haughty mind
Regrets that to Rinaldo once inclin'd,
She, e'er forgetful of her regal state,
Could bend her eyes on such an abject mate.
But Love, who long had mark'd his slighted power, 140
Resolv'd to bear her cold contempt no more,
By poor Medoro took his watchful stand,
And brac'd his bow, and held his shafts in hand.

Soon as Angelica with sad survey
Beheld the youth, who pale and wounded lay, 145
And midst his own misfortune still deplor'd
Th' unbury'd corse of his lamented lord ;
Strange pity touch'd her while she listening hung
To hear the tale that falter'd on his tongue.
Then to her mind she call'd, whate'er before 150
In India taught, she knew of healing lore ;
An art in which such numbers there extell'd,
An art by all in praise and honour held :
Not learn'd by turning many a weary page,
But by the sire bequeath'd from age to age. 155
Once in a lovely mead, with searching view,
A plant she met whose virtues well she knew ;
Or Dittany, or Panacea nam'd,
(Whate'er the herb) for powerful influence fam'd
The blood to staunch and from the wounded part 160
Each dangerous symptom drive and charm the smart.
This now she sought, and, gathering, swift return'd
To where his slaughter'd lord Medoro mourn'd.
Amidst her way a simple swain she view'd
Who through the forest on his horse pursu'd 165

A gentle heifer, that abroad to roam,
(Then past two days) had left her rustic home.
The swain she led, where, issuing with his blood,
Fast and more fast Medoro's vigour flow'd,
'Till from his breast the ground was dy'd beneath, 170
And his soul hover'd on the verge of death.

The virgin from her palfrey now descends,
The peasant lighting, on her steps attends ;
The plant she bruises with a stone, and stands
Tempering the juice between her ivory hands. 175
This o'er his breast she sheds with sovereign art,
And bathes with gentle touch the wounded part :
The wound such virtue from the juice derives,
At once the blood is staunch'd, the youth revives,
And wondrous feels a sudden strength bestow'd : 180
He mounts the horse which late the shepherd rode ;
Yet went not thence, till duly first dispos'd
He saw his breathless prince with earth enclos'd ;
And, laid by noble Dardinello dead,
His Cloridano in one funeral bed. 185

The virgin to the shepherd's cot convey'd
The wounded youth, and there in pity stay'd
To wait his health restor'd ; so deep her breast
Retain'd the thoughts which his first sight impress'd.
She mark'd his every grace, his every charm, 190
And felt, by slow degrees, a new alarm :
Quick beat her pulse, till soon, no more conceal'd,
The flame burst forth and all her soul reveal'd.

Begirt with hills and bosom'd in a wood,
Of structure neat, the peasant's dwelling stood, 195
Which late himself had rais'd : his faithful wife,
And children partners of his humble life.

The damsel there Medoro soon restor'd
 To wonted strength, but ah! meantime deplor'd
 Her own deep wound, that rankled in her heart 200
 With heavier anguish, while an unseen dart
 The light-wing'd archer, still on mischief bent,
 From sparkling eyes, and golden ringlets sent.
 Still, still she loves—and while her care is shown
 To cure another's pains, forgets her own. 205
 Through him she mourns, and while his sufferings cease,
 Her wound but widens and her pangs increase.
 He gains, she loses strength; and now, by turns,
 With cold she freezes, and with heat she burns.
 From day to day improv'd his beauty shines: 210
 She, hapless maid, with wasting sorrow pines,
 Like fleecy snows that, in the warmth of day,
 In heaps dissolve before the solar ray:

Ver. 198. *The damsel there Medoro soon restor'd*] Spenser has imitated this passage of Ariosto, relative to Medoro and Angelica, in his story of Belphebe and Timias the squire, where the virgin in like manner heals Timias; but in one respect the picture is reversed; Angelica in Ariosto is enamoured of Medoro, but in Spenser it is Timias who feels a growing passion for Belphebe. Belphebe, like Angelica, is skilled in the knowledge of herbs.

“For she of herbs had great intendment.”

“Ladies of great antiquity, of the highest rank, were skilful in physic and surgery. Who is ignorant of Medea the daughter of a king? of Circe, or of the wife of Thone, who taught Helena the use and nature of Nepenthe? Let us turn to romance writers, no small imitators of Homer. Sir Philip Sydney in his *Arcadia*, p. 69, introduces Gynecia having skill in surgery. In like manner Erminia in Tasso attends and heals the wounded Tancred.”

See *Upton's Notes on Spenser*.

Ver. 212. *Like fleecy snows--*] Spenser probably had his eye upon this passage in the lines describing the squire Timias falling in love with Belphebe.

Yet still he wasted, as the snow congeal'd
 When the bright sun his beams thereon doth beat.

Fairy Queen, B. iii. c. v. st. 49.

Sick with desire, from him she would receive
What only can her soul's dear health retrieve; 215
Yet fear'd that gentle bliss she sought to gain,
She from his proffer'd love might hope in vain;
Hence to her virgin shame she loos'd the ties,
And gave her tongue the license of her eyes;
Till he, unconscious of the wound he made, 220
Heard her with sighs implore his pitying aid.

O brave Orlando ! O Circassia's king !
What are the virtues that unheeded spring
In breasts like yours ! In vain your boasted fame ;
Where now the meed your glorious labours claim ? 225
Declare one courteous act, one kind regard
She e'er bestow'd your sufferings to reward.
O ! could'st thou, princely Agrican, arise,
Restor'd from nether shades to upper skies !
O stern Ferrau ! O thousands more unnam'd ; 230
That oft her heart with truth and courage claim'd ;
How would you now with jealous pangs behold
A rival's happy arms her limbs enfold !

Thus fair Angelica her grace bestows
On young Medoro, bids him pluck the rose 235
Untouch'd before, and range the hallow'd grove
Where never yet adventurous feet might rove.
Meantime the maid to sanctify her flame,
With holy marriage rites conceal'd the shame :
Love present smil'd, and to the nuptial bed 240
The shepherd's wife the blushing fair one led.

One happy month, befitting where they dwell'd
In humble roof, a rustic feast they held.
The Jamsel, never absent from his sight,
Hangs on her lover with untir'd delight; 245

For ever round him glues her twining arms,
And clasps his neck, and kindles at his charms.
With him in lowly cot, or leafy bower,
By night, by day, she wastes the fleeting hour.
At morn and eve by crystal streams they stray, 250
Or trace the verdant meadow's flowery way.
At sultry noon they seek a gloomy cave,
Like that which from the storm a shelter gave,
What time the Trojan prince and Tyrian queen*
Their loves entrusted to the sacred scene. 255
Where'er a tree its verdant boughs display'd
O'er rills and founts to cast a waving shade,
The knife and pointed steel the bark impress'd,
And oft the rocks their sportive toys confess'd.
A thousand parts reveal'd their mutual flames, 260
A thousand places show'd the lovers' names,
Angelica and her Medoro twin'd,
In posied wreaths and amorous knots combin'd.
Now rolling time reprov'd the damsel's stay,
And urg'd her to resume her purpos'd way, 265
In India's realms, at rich Cathay to crown
Her dear Medoro on the regal throne.
Around her arm a golden circlet brac'd
Of rarest worth, with sparkling jewels grac'd,
In sign of brave Orlando's love she wore, 270
And long preserv'd the valu'd gift she bore.
To Ziliantes this Morgana gave,
What time she kept him hid beneath the wave;

* Æneas and Dido.

Ver. 272. *To Ziliantes this Morgana gave,—*] Morgana, the fairy of riches (see Note on Book vi. ver. 269.) Ziliantes was son of Ionodant, and younger brother to Brandimart; he was beloved

He, to his father Monodant restor'd
Ere long by virtue of Orlando's sword, 275
This costly bracelet with a grateful mind
Bestow'd, Orlando's conquering arm to bind,

by Morgana, and after having been eighteen years detained by her in her subterraneous palace, was set at liberty by the valour of Orlando. The story of this fairy and her dwelling is full of imagination, and thus told by Boyardo.

Orlando, travelling to the assistance of Angelica, was met, by a lady seated on a palfrey, having in her hands a book, and wearing at her girdle a rich horn of exquisite workmanship; she addressed the knight in this manner.

"Sir knight, you have now met with a most wonderful and perilous adventure, which requires all the valour of such a champion as your appearance bespeaks you to be. This horn, which is made by enchantment, must be sounded three times, and every time of sounding the horn consult the book, which will instruct you what is further to be done: but if any knight should find his courage fail at the first blast of the horn, he will be for ever made prisoner in the island of the enchanted lake. The first and second time of sounding the horn will expose you to most dreadful and unheard-of perils, but the third time will finish the adventure, and put it in your power, without any further trial of valour, to make all the remainder of your life completely happy."

Orlando, having heard this, expressed his eager desire to undertake the adventure; and receiving from the lady's hand the book and horn, he sounded such a blast as made the earth tremble, and immediately a rock dividing in two parts, discovered a vast opening in the earth, whence rushed out two furious bulls with horns of iron, and hides of different colours. Orlando, upon having recourse to his book, was instructed to yoke the bulls and plough up the field that lay round the rock: this, after an obstinate battle with the bulls, he performed; and then setting them at liberty, they fled with dreadful bellowings to the forest, and disappeared. Orlando sounded the horn a second time, when the earth again trembled, and a mountain near him opening, its summit cast forth flames in great abundance. While the knight impatiently waited for the issue, a huge dragon came forth of most tremendous aspect; his scales were green and shone with gold, his wings of different colours, he brandished beyond his sharp teeth three tongues, and made a dreadful noise with the lashing of his tail, while volumes of smoke, mixed with

By him decreed in future time to prove
With fair Angelica his pledge of love.

Not for the giver, or his suit despis'd, 280
But for its cost the precious gift she priz'd.

sparks and fire, issued from his mouth and ears. Orlando having again consulted his book, was ordered to attack the monster with the utmost celerity, and attempt to sever his head from his body before the poisonous fumes should have any fatal effect; this done, he was directed to take out all the dragon's teeth, and sow them in the furrows which he had just ploughed up. The knight then intrepidly advanced to attack the monster, who came towards him with wings extended, and opening his jaws to swallow him. Orlando found himself most dreadfully annoyed with the poison and fire; his shield was immediately consumed, his crest caught the flame, and all his apparel was nearly burnt to ashes, while the smoke was so thick that he could not see to aim his blows, till at length by a fortunate stroke he cut off the head of his enemy, and drawing out the teeth, sowed them, as the book had directed, in the furrows of the new-ploughed field. Turpin relates, that immediately the crests of helmets began to appear above the ground, next, the breasts and shoulders of armed men, till a numerous company with shouts and clamours, and the clangor of horns and trumpets, united their weapons, and furiously attacked the earl; but he, drawing his sword Durindana, and remounting his horse, received them with such valour, that the whole number were soon slain, and thus ended their life nearly as soon as it began.

It now remained to sound the horn for the last time, which Orlando having done, looked round to see the conclusion of the adventure; when, nothing appearing, he began to think himself mocked: at length he beheld coming towards him through the flowery meadow a white stag, at which he exclaimed, with great marks of disappointment, "Is this the wonderful end of my labours?" He then threw his book and horn on the ground, and was about to depart with indignation, but the lady stopping him, cried out, "Stay, valorous knight, and learn that no king or warrior could ever meet with a more wonderful adventure than this; know, that thy work is not yet finished: Not far from hence is a place called the island of Riches, where dwells the fairy Morgana, who is deputed by Heaven to dispense to mortals all the wealth that is enjoyed in this world: she hides her treasures in the bowels of the earth, and has sent this white hind to enrich you, as a glorious recompense for

This midst the isle of tears she strangely kept,
 (Where captive maids their cruel fortune wept)
 When, bound by savage hands, she naked stood
 To feed the monster rising from the flood,

285

your having three times sounded that horn, which no man before ever sounded a second time. The fairy sends through the world this stag, which is enchanted, and has, as thou seest, golden horns: he who wishes to take him must pursue him with unremitted vigour for six days, and on the seventh day he will stop by the side of a fountain to wash, and there suffer himself to be taken: this wonderful animal sheds his horns six times a day, every branch of his horns bears thirty ingots of gold: so that having obtained this stag, thou wilt be possessed of every happiness which wealth can purchase, and may'st moreover acquire the love of the fairy Morgana, whose beauty is unparalleled."

Orlando scarcely suffered the lady to finish her discourse, but replied with a smile, that he was not come thither for such intent, that he despised riches, and only sought for the reward that attends great and glorious actions*.

Upon this Orlando delivered the book and horn again to the lady, and resumed his journey towards Albracca.

Astolpho, Rinaldo, Iroldo, and Prasildo travelling together, found a lady in great affliction, who related to them that her sister was fallen into the hands of a cruel giant, who having stripped her naked and bound her to a tree, scourged her from time to time in a

Ver. 282. *This midst the isle of tears she strangely kept,*] Ruscelli, the Italian commentator, has taken great pains to reconcile the seeming impossibility that Angelica should continue in possession of this bracelet, when she was stript naked by the people of Ebuda: he supposes that these islanders, who are represented so superstitious by the poet, might think it a more acceptable and honourable offering to Proteus, if they exposed the virgin with this ornament to be devoured by the monster, as the ancients were accustomed in their sacrifices to gild the horns of the victim, and decorate them with other idle ceremonies. But surely the poet might as well himself have thus accounted for the difficulty in his narrative: this may serve, however, as one specimen, among many others, of the genius of the Italian commentators, who would generally defend their favourite poet in the most glaring absurdity.

* See note to Book vi. ver. 269.

Now wanting gold to give the simple pair,
The shepherd and his wife, whose honest care
Show'd, while the lovers shar'd their homely board,
Such friendly welcome as their means afford,

most inhuman manner: on this the knights engaged to do their utmost to deliver her; and soon after all together arrived at a river, over which was a bridge so narrow that only one person could pass on foot: on the further side of the river was a tower where the villain inhabited, and in the meadow a large and deep lake: the knights beheld the unfortunate woman tied to a cypress tree, and bathed in blood, while her tormentor exercised his cruelty upon her. Iroldo and Prasildo, having first passed the bridge, separately attacked the villain, but were both overcome, and cast by him to the bottom of the lake. Rinaldo then attacked him; and after an obstinate combat, the villain, in vain endeavouring to disengage himself from Rinaldo's hold, threw himself with Rinaldo into the lake, where both immediately sunk to the bottom and disappeared, leaving Astolpho in great affliction for the loss of his friend. The lady, who was tied to the tree, was released, and the two sisters, with Astolpho, departed, taking with them Rinaldo's horse Bayardo.

Orlando, having destroyed the garden of Falerina*, arrived, accompanied by that enchantress, where the above mentioned warriors, with Dudon, who had since been made prisoner with them, were kept in the enchanted lake. The earl there beheld a trophy raised of the arms of Rinaldo, and supposing him to be slain, forgot all the enmity that had subsisted between them, immediately passed over the bridge to revenge his death, and furiously attacked Arridano, who lay in the meadow exulting over the trophy of Rinaldo. A dreadful battle ensued between them; for Morgana had not only given Arridano impenetrable armour, but had formed such a spell that the strength of the giant always exceeded six times the strength of every one with whom he was engaged. At length Arridano, seizing Orlando, as he had before Rinaldo, plunged with him headlong into the lake. Falerina, terrified at the sight, immediately fled; and as soon as the combatants reached the bottom, Orlando found himself in the middle of a beautiful meadow, surrounded by a wall of crystal. The knight, as he fell, endeavoured in vain to escape from the grasp of Arridano, but as soon as they touched the ground, his enemy loosened his hold, and thought to strip him of his armour, when the earl renewed the combat with

* See note to Book xli. ver. 192, for this story.

This from her arm she drew, and bade the swain 290
The valu'd treasure for her sake retain.

Now tow'ards the hills the happy lovers ride,
The steepy hills that France from Spain divide;

greater fury than ever, and at length, by the help of his sword Balisarda, against which no enchantment could avail, he deprived the enemy of life.

Orlando then, entering at a portal which he discovered in a rock, passed on for a long time in total darkness, till at last he discovered a light that shone like the sun at noon day, when he came to the bank of a wide river, over which was a long narrow bridge, where stood the figure of an armed man all of iron, and beyond the bridge was a plain heaped with pearls and precious stones, more in number than the flowers that adorn the earth in spring, or the stars of Heaven. This place contained the treasures of the fairy Morgana.

Orlando then with his drawn sword attempting to pass the bridge, the armed figure struck it with his massy club, and the whole pile sunk immediately into the river: while Orlando stood gazing in admiration, another bridge appeared in the place of the former: the knight again attempted the passage, but the armed figure again raised his club, and the bridge sunk as before. Orlando thus baffled, yet determined to reach the further side, now exerting all his strength, with a prodigious effort leaped over the river, armed as he was, and alighted safe in the meadow, where entering into a large square building, he beheld the figure of a king seated on a throne with numbers standing round him: they were all formed of gold, and covered with pearls, rubies, and diamonds: before the king was a table spread with a most magnificent banquet; but over his head was suspended a drawn sword with the point downward, and at his left hand stood one with his bow bent as ready to let fly an arrow; on his right side stood another, exactly resembling the former, holding a scroll in his hand with this inscription: "*Riches and Pomp are of no value if possessed with fear, and Pleasure and Greatness avail us nothing if acquired with the loss of peace.*" On the middle of the table, on a fleur-de-lys of gold, was a ruby of prodigious size, which gave light to all the place, and on each side was a door that led from the saloon. Orlando, who paid little attention to the riches which he beheld, attempted to enter one of the doors, but found no light to guide his steps: recalling then to mind the carbuncle, he resolved to make use of it, and advanced to seize it, but the figure that stood with his bow bent, immediately let fly an arrow that struck the carbuncle, which immediately flew off from

Thence to Valencia they direct their way,
Or Barcelona there awhile to stay, 295
Till thence some vessel with propitious gale,
Should loose for eastern lands the spreading sail :

the fleur-de-lys, and left the earl in darkness: a dreadful earthquake then followed, accompanied with repeated claps of thunder, while Orlando stood undaunted expecting the issue. The earthquake and thunder ceasing, the stone again took its place on the fleur-de-lys, and enlightened the saloon with more splendor than before. The knight attempted again to seize the carbuncle, but the archer again shot his arrow, and all was left in darkness; the thunder and earthquake returned, and continued above an hour, till the carbuncle once more resumed its station. Orlando, determined to pursue his purpose, rushed forwards intrepidly with his lifted shield, on which he received the arrow that fell ineffectual to the ground; he then took the stone without further opposition, and, directing his steps by the enchanted light, descended a staircase which led to a prison, in which were confined Rinaldo, Brandimart, and Dudon. Orlando beheld on a rock the following words engraven: "Whoever thou art, O knight or damsel! that hast reached this place, know that thou shalt never return, unless thou canst seize the fairy that inhabits these regions, whose locks grow only from her forehead, and who is bald behind." Orlando, having read this inscription, traversed a beautiful meadow enamelled with a thousand different flowers, and at last espied Morgana asleep by the side of a fountain; he stood some time in contemplation of her beauty, when he suddenly heard a voice that bade him seize the fairy by her fore lock before she awaked and escaped his hands: at the sound of this voice Orlando turning, came to a rock of crystal, through which he beheld imprisoned Dudon, Rinaldo, and Brandimart: at this sight the earl, greatly afflicted, lifted up his sword to have hewn an opening in the rock, but the three knights called aloud to him to forbear, for should the rock be broken they must all inevitably perish. Orlando was then addressed by a beautiful imprisoned lady, who seemed in great affliction, and told him there was no way to enter the prison but by a gate which appeared of diamonds and emeralds, of which Morgana kept the keys; to procure which he must immediately return to the fountain, and endeavour to secure her person. The earl, impatient to enter the rock, hastened back to the fountain, where he found the fairy dancing, and singing these words: "Whoever is desirous to enjoy in this world wealth, pleasure, honours, and dignities, let him lay hold on this golden lock that I wear from my forehead, and

And now, descending from the mountain's height,
The sea below Garona struck their sight.

Thus journeying on, upon the sands they view 300
A naked man of pale and ghastly hue;

I will fulfil all his wishes: but let him not forego the advantage in his power, since time past can never be recalled; I shall turn from him and leave him to lament his folly." So sung the fairy; but as soon as she beheld Orlando approaching, she immediately fled with the utmost speed, the knight pursuing her till they left the meadow, and came into a country full of briars and brambles; and now the sky was suddenly overcast, when from a dark cave rushed out a female figure of ghastly appearance, with a pale and meagre countenance, holding in her hand a scourge, which she continually exercised on herself; but seeing Orlando hold Morgana in chace, she began to follow him, and when he demanded who she was, she replied, " My name is Repentance, and I come to bear you company till the end of your course, during which you must feel the severity of my stripes." As she spoke thus, Orlando continued to pursue Morgana, while the hag, close behind, from time to time applied her scourge to him, nor could all his threats or valour free him from her persecution: at length he overtook the fairy, and fastening his hand in her lock, the hag, that till then had followed, immediately left him, the sky cleared up, the country assumed a smiling appearance, and, instead of thorns and briars, the earth was covered with odoriferous flowers. Orlando having stayed the fairy, demanded of her the keys of the prison, which she engaged to deliver to him, upon condition that he would leave behind Ziliantes, the son of Monodant, to which Orlando agreed. Morgana then gave up the keys, and all her prisoners, except Ziliantes, were set at liberty.

After Orlando had achieved this adventure, he fell with Brandimart into the hands of Monodant, who had long endeavoured to get Orlando into his power, in order to deliver him up to Morgana, who, on these terms, had promised to restore his son Ziliantes: Brandimart persuaded his friend to make his escape, and remained behind in his stead. Orlando then repaired again to the enchanted dwelling of Morgana, when coming to the river and bridge, where he formerly encountered Arridano, he beheld a lady bitterly weeping and lamenting over the body of a dead dragon: while Orlando stood wondering at such a spectacle, the lady took the dragon in her arms, and entering a bark, went into the middle of the lake, and suddenly disappeared. In the mean time another lady accosted

Like some foul swain he lies with brutal mien,
His sense distraught, his limbs with filth obscene :

He leaps upon them fierce (as unwares

A snarling cur the passing stranger scares)

305

Orlando : this was Flordelis, wife to Brandimart, who now implored the assistance of the earl for her husband, whom she supposed to be prisoner in the palace of Morgana, but was to her great joy acquainted that Brandimart had been already freed from that confinement, and that Orlando had once more undertaken the adventure of the lake to deliver Ziliantes from the fairy.

While Flordelis was making vows for the success of Orlando, the knight advanced towards a little gate concealed under a rock covered over with thorns and brambles, by which he lately left the subterranean dwelling : through this, after a long descent, he came to the place where the golden king sat at the table, and passed on till he arrived at the garden of Morgana, where he saw the fairy by the side of the fountain with the beautiful youth Ziliantes, whom she was caressing with the utmost tenderness, but whose face was still impressed with a deadly paleness, through the cruel recollection of his late dreadful metamorphosis.

When Orlando, after having slain Arridano, had delivered the prisoners and departed, Morgana, whose cruelty exceeded her beauty, by the force of spells and incantations, transformed the wretched Ziliantes into the shape of a fearful dragon, in order to place him as a guard to the bridge ; but whether from a too powerful application of her spells, or from whatever other cause, no sooner had the youth assumed his new form, but he uttered a loud cry and expired. The fairy, inconsolable at this event, carried him back with her to her habitation, where by her powerful art she restored him again to life, and to his own natural shape.

As soon as Orlando saw Morgana, he rushed upon her, and seized her by the locks, when she immediately had recourse to supplications, offering him infinite riches if he would permit Ziliantes still to remain with her ; the knight, deaf to all her intreaties, took Ziliantes by the hand, and led him up the passage by which he had descended ; but before he released the fairy, whom he still held by the locks, he made her swear by Demogorgon, the terror of fairies, that she never more would disturb him with her incantations. Morgana having sworn, descended to her habitation, and Orlando, with Ziliantes, came out at the entrance of the rock, where they found Flordelis on her knees. All three then departed together for the court of Monodant, where Orlando delivered Ziliantes to his father,

And threatens sore to work them woe, and scorn :
But to Marphisa let us now return*.

To her, to Gryphon, Aquilant again,
To good Astolpho let us change the strain,

* He follows Angelica and Medoro, B. xxix. ver. 413.

and where Brandimart, who had been stolen away in his infancy, was discovered to be the son of Monodant, and elder brother to Ziliantes."

Orl. Ian. Book i. C. xxiv. xxv. B. ii. C. vii. viii. xii. xiii.

Amidst all the extravagant wildness of these fictions of romance, the classic reader will discover many incidents taken from the heroic and mythological fables of antiquity: In perusing the adventure of the enchanted horn, achieved by Orlando in the beginning of this narrative, every one must remember the dragon of Cadmus, and the bulls of Jason. It has been already observed (see note to Book vi. ver. 269.) that Spenser had undoubtedly in his eye the palace of Morgana, when he described the riches of Mammon; he has a man of golden mold, that like the Italian poet's iron guard, defends a passage.

He brought him to a darksome narrow strait,
To a broad gate all built of beaten gold;
The gate was open, but therein did wait
A sturdy villain striding stiff and bold,
As if the highest God defy he would;
In his right hand an iron club he held,
But he himself was all of golden mold, &c.

Fairy Queen, Book ii. C. vii. st. 40.

Mr. Warton gives an account of a book, intitled *Gesta Romanorum*, date supposed to be about 1473, where, among many wonderful stories, is a story, the latter part of which is very similar to this descent of Orlando to the palace of Morgana.

"There was an image in the city of Rome, which stretched forth its right hand, on the middle finger of which was written, *strike here*. For a long time none could understand the meaning of this mysterious inscription. At length a certain subtle clerk, who came to see this famous image, observed, as the sun shone against it, the

Ver. 308. -- Gryphon, Aquilant--Astolpho, --] Sansonetto is here omitted by the poet, though one of their company.

Who, spent with toil, while present death they view'd,
But ill oppos'd the furies of the flood: 311
Three days the storm with ceaseless terror rag'd,
And gave no token yet of wrath assuag'd :
The hostile surge and wind's increasing power
From head to stern the planks and tackling tore; 315
And what unbroken seem'd the storm to brave,
The sailor hew'd and hurl'd into the wave.
One stands apart and marks with head declin'd
The vessel's course, as pale beside him shin'd

shadow of the inscribed finger on the ground at some distance. He immediately took a spade, and began to dig exactly on that spot. He came at length to a flight of steps, which descended far under ground, and led him to a stately palace: here he entered a hall, where was a king and queen sitting at a table, with their nobles and a multitude of people all clothed in rich garments; but no person spoke a word. He looked towards one corner, where he saw a polished carbuncle, which illuminated the whole room: in the opposite corner he perceived the figure of a man standing, having a bended bow with an arrow in his hand, as prepared to shoot. On his forehead was written, *I am who am, nothing can escape my stroke, not even yonder carbuncle which shines so bright.* The clerk beheld all with amazement, and entering a chamber, saw the most beautiful ladies working at the loom in purple; but all was silence. He then entered a stable full of the most excellent horses and asses; he touched some of them, and they were immediately turned into stone. He next surveyed all the apartments of the palace, which abounded with all that his wishes could desire: he again visited the hall, and now began to reflect how he should return; but (says he) all my report of these things will not be believed, unless I carry something back with me. He therefore took from the principal table a golden cap and a golden knife, and placed them in his bosom, when the man, who stood in the corner with the bow, immediately shot at the carbuncle, which he shattered into a thousand pieces: at that moment it became dark as night: In this darkness not being able to find his way, he remained in the subterranean palace, and soon died a miserable death."

The lanthorn's gleam, and one with careful sight 320
 The hold examines by the torches' light.
 One at the prow, one at the stern explores
 The glasses' sands that show the waining hours,
 And oft returns to learn the vessel's way,
 How far her track, and how her bearings lay. 325
 Then in the middle ship, with chart in hand,
 Each hastens where th' affrighted sailor-band
 Their pilot meet, and mutual aid demand. }
 Now to Limisso's fatal coast we steer;
 (Thus one began) her dangerous sands appear! 330
 See! Tripoly's sharp rocks (another cry'd)
 That oft the vessel's shatter'd planks divide.
 One cries—Behold us on Satalia borne,
 Which many a mariner has cause to mourn.
 Each reasons as he thinks, while every breast 335
 Pale terror and despair alike possess'd.
 Th' ensuing morn with greater force prevail'd
 The wind and sea that still the bark assail'd.
 At once the wind the shatter'd foresail tears,
 And from the helm the sea the rudder bears. 340
 Who fears not now must bear a breast of steel,
 Or marble heart, unknowing how to feel.
 Marphisa, she, who danger late defy'd,
 No longer here her secret dread deny'd.
 What vows of pilgrimage the seamen frame! 345
 To Sinai, Rome, Ettino's virgin-dame,

Ver. 329. *Now to Limisso's fatal coast—*] Called by the ancients Syrtis; certain dangerous sands on the confines of Afric near Egypt.

Ver. 346. — *Ettino's virgin-dame,*] Some say, that by Ettino is meant a certain church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, built among

Galitia, Cyprus, but o'er all so dear,
That hallow'd tomb which Christian souls revere!

Meantime aloft amidst the surging tides,

✓ Amidst the clouds the groaning vessel rides. 350

The trembling pilot from the creaking mast

The mainsail cuts, and now he bids to cast

From poop or prow, into the greedy flood,

Huge chests and bales, with every useless load.

He clear'd each part, and to the roaring wave 355

Rich merchandize and shining treasures gave.

One ply'd the pump, from rushing streams to free

The ship, and to the sea return'd the sea.

Another watch'd where'er the surge he 'spy'd

With lashing force the plank from plank divide. 360

Four dreadful days, on mountain-billows cast,

The seamen toil'd, and every hope was past;

When sudden breaking on their raptur'd sight,

Appear'd the splendor of Saint Ermo's light;

the ruins of Aquileia: and so called from Utino, a rock in the city. Others say, that it is a place in Candia, called Tino, where is a church dedicated to the Virgin famous for many imputed miracles.

Porcacchi.

Ver. 364. — *Saint Ermo's light*;] Naturalists explain that these lights which appear to sailors are from natural causes, and believe that they not only are seen on the masts of ships, but also on the tops of lances in an army. It is however the firm opinion of mariners, that such phenomena are sent as marks of favour from their protector Saint Ermo, whose remains are held in great veneration at Gaeta.

Ruscelli.

Camöens in his *Lusiad* describes these lights that are often seen in the time of a storm: Gama, giving an account of his voyage to the king of Melinda, says:

B. XIX. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 77

Low settling on the prow, with ray serene 365
 It shone, for masts or sails no more were seen.
 The crew elated saw the dancing gleam ;
 Each, on his knees, ador'd the favouring beam ;
 And begg'd, with trembling voice and watery eyes,
 A truce from threatening waves and raging skies. 370
 The storm (till then relentless) ceas'd to roar,
 South, East, and blustering North were heard no more :
 Now reign'd sole tyrant o'er the seas extent,
 Th' inclement West, while from his mouth he sent
 A powerful blast, and with it urg'd along 375
 The foamy current, terrible and strong ;

Those dreadful wonders of the deep I saw
 Which fill'd the sailors' breasts with sacred awe ;
 And which the sages, of their learning vain,
 Esteem the phantoms of the dreamful brain :
 That living fire, by seamen held divine,
 Of Heaven's own care in storms the holy sign,
 Which midst the horrors of the tempest plays,
 And on the blasts' dark wings will gaily blaze ;
 These eyes distinct have seen that living fire
 Glide through the storm and round my sails aspire.

Mickle, Book v.

" This phenomenon is thus accounted for in Natural History. The sulphureous vapours of the air, after being violently agitated by a tempest, unite, and when the humidity begins to subside, as is the case when the storm is almost exhausted, by the agitation of their atoms, they take fire, and are attracted by the masts and cordage of the ship. Being thus naturally the pledges of the approaching calm, it is no wonder that the superstition of sailors should in all ages have esteemed them divine. In the expedition of the Golden Fleece, in a violent tempest, these fires were seen to hover over the heads of Castor and Pollux, who were two of the Argonauts, and a calm immediately ensued. After the apotheosis of these heroes, the Grecian sailors invoked these fires by the names of Castor and Pollux, or the sons of Jupiter."

Mickle's Note to the above passage.

That drove the flying bark with swifter force
Than strength of wing impels the falcon's course,
While the pale pilot deem'd his vessel lost,
Or driven beyond our world to Ocean's utmost coast. 380
The wary seaman hence his skill apply'd,
And from the poop amidst the tumbling tide
His anchor cast : the anchor slipp'd at need
With haulser huge, abates their fearful speed.
By this, but chief by Heaven's preserving aid, 385
Whose happy omen, on the prow display'd,
Reviv'd their hope, the ship securely rode,
That else had sunk entomb'd beneath the flood.

Now from Laiazzo's gulph the Syrian lands
They see, where high a peopled city stands, 390
Of circuit wide ; and nearer they survey
A fort on either side to guard the bay.

Soon as the pilot well the land espies,
On his pale cheek the frightened colour dies :
He loaths the hateful coast ; yet would he try 395
The deep once more, he knows not how to fly :
His masts and yards are lost, and rent away
His sails and tackling scatter'd o'er the sea.
The wretch, whom fate ordains these climes to gain,
Is made a captive, or unpity'd slain. 400

While thus they paus'd, the seamen fear'd to view
Embarking from the shore a numerous crew,
With vessels arm'd against their ship unite,
Unfit for sea, but more unfit for fight.

While thus in fearful doubt the pilot stands 405
Which course to take, the English knight demands
What secret thoughts his wavering breast divide,
And why he sought not in the port to ride ?

✓ To whom the pilot thus--Yon hostile strand
 Is lin'd with women, whose inhuman hand, 410
 By ancient law, each stranger-guest consigns
 To death relentless, or in chains confines:
 He only 'scapes, whose arms in measur'd field
 Can make ten champions to his prowess yield:
 And next, at night, a softer conflict prove, 415
 To win ten females in the lists of love.
 Should he t' atchieve the former task suffice,
 But in the second fail, he surely dies!
 He dies! and, destin'd to ignoble toil,
 His friends their cattle feed, or turn the soil! 420
 In both the trials should success ensue,
 He gains full freedom for his social crew,
 Himself unfree—for husband he remains
 Of ten fair females, as his choice ordains.

Astolpho heard, nor could from laughter hold 425
 At this strange custom by the pilot told.
 Now Sansonetto, now Marphisa near,
 Now Gryphon with his brother came to hear
 Why thus aloof the shatter'd bark remain'd,
 Nor with her crew th' inviting harbour gain'd. 430
 Here let me perish (thus the pilot spoke)
 Ere bow my neck to such ignoble yoke.

Alike with him agreed the sailor crew:
 Not so Marphisa and the warlike few,
 Far other they, who safer deem'd the shore 435
 Beset with arms, than seas where tempests roar;

Ver. 409. *To whom the pilot thus--Yon hostile strand*

Is lin'd with women, --] This strange story of the
 Amazons is not to be found in Boyardo. Ariosto in this fable seems
 to have blended the accounts of the Amazons of antiquity with
 those of the women of Lemnos.

Who more the billows fear'd and wrecking sands
Than weapons brandish'd in a hundred hands.
This—every place—they held secure from fear,
Where'er their grasp could wield the sword or spear, 440
Eager they burn the hostile strand to gain;
But England's warrior, foremost of the train,
Demands to land; his magic horn he knew
(If arms should fail) would every force subdue.
Now divers parts they took: one loudly cry'd 445
To make the port, as loudly one deny'd.
At length the pilot, urg'd by stronger force,
Unwilling to the harbour shap'd his course.

When first discover'd on the distant flood,
Full in the cruel city's view they stood, 450
The mariners beheld a galley leave
The land, and with a crew the billows cleave
T' assail their wretched bark, while unresolved
Uncertain schemes their jarring breasts revolv'd.
Now to the prow and stern th' invading train 455
Huge cables fix, and through the dashing main
Impel the hulk, till urg'd by strength of oars
And drawn with toil it gains at length the shores.
Meantime the knights their limbs in armour case,
And by their sides the trusty falchion place, 460

✓ And strive, with dauntless looks and words, to cheer
The pilot's doubts, and ease the seamen's fear.

The spacious harbour like a crescent bends,
And four long miles in winding course extends:
From horn to horn a narrow mouth appears, 465
And at each horn a fort its summit rears.
The natives fear no foes can e'er prevail
Till fortune from the south their walls assail.

Built like a theatre in wide extent

The circling city reach'd the hill's descent. 470

No sooner enter'd, when, by rumour blown,
The ship's arrival through the land was known,
And arm'd with bows in all the dress of war,
Six thousand females to the port repair.

A range of ships from rock to rock they place, 475
Each hope of flight from every breast to chase,
And with huge chains, prepar'd for such design,
Close up the mouth, and all within confine.

A hoary matron, who in length of years
Like Hecuba or Cuma's maid appears, 480
The pilot calls, and wills him to reply
If there his wretched partners chuse to die;
Or wiser, as the country's laws declare,
Submit their necks the servile yoke to bear?
To each the choice is offer'd—there to fall 485
With freedom—or survive in hopeless thrall.

'Tis true, should one amongst you dare engage
(She cries) with ten th' unequal fight to wage:
These should he slay, and next in one short night
Woo ten fair damsels to the nuptial rite, 490
With us a sovereign's rank he shall possess,
And you, if such your will, depart in peace:
Or all, or part, securely here may live,
The choice is yours, and these the terms we give:
Who here in freedom would remain, must wed 495
Ten females to partake his marriage bed.
But should your champion in the listed field,
Though living, to the ten in prowess yield,
Or want the powers the second prize to gain,
We will that you be slaves, and he be slain. 500

The beldame thus; but where she deem'd to meet
With doubt or terror, found a dauntless heat
In every knight: each on himself relies,
And hopes in either list to win the prize.
No less Marphisa's heart with courage glows, 505
Though for the second task her sex she knows
But ill prepar'd, yet hopes she to supply
With sword the gifts that Nature might deny.
Their answer then, in general council weigh'd,
The pilot to the hoary dame convey'd: 510
That one amongst them stood prepar'd to prove
The task of battle first, and then of love.

No more oppos'd, the seamen now secure
Their anchor, and on land the vessel moor.
The bridge is cast, and from the deck proceed 515
The shining warrior and the prancing steed.
Amidst the city with surprise they view
The mighty numbers of the female crew.
With shorten'd vesture part on horseback swarm,
Or in the crowded square like warriors arm. 520
The men nor spear, nor sword, are seen to bear,
Nor ought of weapons that pertain to war,
Save only ten—and these, as late I told,
(So ancient custom wills) their lances hold.
The rest attend the loom, the needle ply, 525
Or twist the wool, or cull the various dye:
Adown their limbs long matron garments flow,
Their mien is feminine, their pace is slow.
Some kept in chains, at will their tyrants send
The lands to culture, and the herds to tend. 530
Few are the males, and scarce the region round
A hundred for a thousand females found.

The knights who deem'd by lot to fix his name,
Whose arm might for the rest the combat claim,
Would from the chance the martial dame* withhold,
By sex unfit amidst their names enroll'd 536

Both palms to win; but she with noble pride
Will with her peers the fated scroll abide:
On her it fell—I first in fight will die
Ere you (she cry'd) in cruel bondage lie: 540

This steel (and as she spoke her trusty sword
She grasp'd) your pledge of safety shall afford.
With this I mean each fatal tie to loose,
As Alexander cut the Gordian noose.

While earth endures, no stranger shall again 545
Of this dire law and cruel land complain.

Thus she; and what her favouring fortune sends
Each knight allows, and to her arm commends
The glorious charge such numerous foes to brave,
And fall in battle, or their freedom save. 550

Now ready clad in mail and cuirass bright
She hastens to the field, and claims the fight.

Far in the city was a square enclos'd,
And set apart with seats around dispos'd,
To please the vulgar herd with many a fray 555
Of wrestling, tournament, and martial play.

Four brazen gates, that open in the place,
Admit the press, while through the crowded space
Arm'd females throng, where blending hope and fear,
They bid Marphisa in the list appear. 560

* Marphisa.

The virgin enters on a dappled steed
Of colour grey, of more than common breed;
Small was his head, his joints were strongly knit,
Proudly he paw'd and champ'd the frothy bit;
Fire flash'd his eyes—this from a thousand more, 565
Of generous strain in Norandino's store,
The monarch chose, and, deck'd with trappings brave,
The regal present to Marphisa gave;
Who, entering at the south, where on the gate
The mid-day shone, stood still the charge to wait; 570
Nor waited long, when echo'd sharp and clear,
The trumpet's clangour rung in every ear.
Then from the portal of the north she saw
Her ten opponents to the combat draw.
The first bold knight, who look'd himself a host, 575
Seem'd in his arm the force of all to boast.
The list he enter'd on a courser's back
Of strongest frame, and more than raven black,
Save that his front and hindmost foot display'd
Some snow-white hairs amid the dusky shade. 580
Clad like his steed in sable weeds of woe
The champion came, as if he meant to show
An emblem of his own distressful state,
How small his comfort, and his griefs how great!
The trumpet sounds, and to the charge address 585
At once nine warriors place the lance in rest:
But he, the mourning knight, whose noble heart
Disdains th' advantage, stands awhile apart;
Howe'er compell'd in such a hateful cause,
Resolv'd in this his will should bend the laws: 590
Apart he stands, the conflict to survey,
And see one lance with nine dispute the day.

The steed with easy pace and steady force
Bore the brave virgin to th' unequal course,
Who wielded in her grasp so huge a spear 595
Scarce four suffic'd th' enormous weight to rear.
This from the ship, with wary choice, she bore,
The stoutest beam amidst a numerous store.
So fierce she came, with such a dauntless look,
A thousand cheeks grew pale, a thousand bosoms
shook.

Swift through the first, as if his fenceless breast 601
No armour wore, the furious steel she press'd.
His iron-plated shield, with strength impell'd
The weapon pass'd and through the cuirass held,
The point drove on, till smear'd with vital blood, 605
Through back and breast a foot behind it stood.
The virgin left the wretched warrior slain,
And turn'd against the rest with loosen'd rein:
Against the second bold advancing foe,
And next the third she dealt so fierce a blow, 610
That either's spinal bone the weapon broke,
And both at once their seats and life forsook.
Together now the remnant six engag'd
The gallant maid, and war united wag'd.
So have I seen a bomb the ranks divide, 615
As fierce Marphisa pierc'd the martial tide:
Against her corslet javelins snapt in vain,
While she unmov'd could every stroke sustain.
In tennis thus not more the fencing wall
Resists the impulse of the bounding ball. 620
In vain the force of hostile weapon sought
To pierce her arms of purest temper wrought;

By magic wrought in Styx's burning steam,
 And hissing plung'd in black Avernus' stream.
 Now at the barrier bounds awhile she stay'd, 625
 Then wheel'd her courser, and with brandish'd blade
 The rest assail'd, her victory pursu'd,
 And to the elbows dy'd her arms in blood.
 From this a hand, from that she lops the head :
 On one the ghastly sword so just is sped, 630
 Head, arms, and breast fall sever'd on the plain ;
 The legs and belly on the steed remain.
 Thus half the man (a dreadful sight) appear'd :
 So holy pilgrims, to the saint rever'd,
 For members heal'd, of wax or silver frame 635 }
 The parts restor'd, and in their patron's name,
 Suspend the pious gift to him whose aid they claim. }
 One, as the list he fled, she swift pursu'd,
 And ere he reach'd the midst, asunder hew'd
 His head and bleeding trunk, that never art 640
 Of surgeon could suffice to close the part.
 Thus by her valour each in turn was slain,
 Or lay extended senseless on the plain,
 That well she knew he never more could rear
 The massy buckler or the pointed spear. 645
 The knight, who in the list retir'd alone,
 Beheld the nine by one brave arm o'erethrown,
 Now spurr'd his steed to show not fear detain'd,
 But courtesy his generous arm restrain'd ;

Ver. 634. *So holy pilgrims,—*] This similitude alludes to the custom in the Romish church of making limbs of wax, ivory or silver, which the pilgrims hang up as an offering dedicated to the Saint, by whom they are supposed to be healed of any disease or lameness.

B. XIX. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 87

Then beckoning with his hand he first began 650

To ask a parley ere the course he ran ;

And little thinking that with man's array,

Conceal'd in martial weeds a virgin lay,

Graceful he spoke—Thy spirits, valiant knight,

May surely droop in such unequal fight ; 655

Nor will I basely now in arms oppose

That strength already spent with numerous foes.

Till morn I give thee from the field to rest,

Then may'st thou turn to fresher strife adrest :

So shall my sword a noble combat claim, 660

Nor with thy vigour spent pollute my fame.

To warlike toils these limbs have long been bred :

Nor have I toil'd so far (Marphisa said)

But to thy cost I trust, thou soon shalt find

My nerve and spirit of a nobler kind. 665

Thy words, the proffer of a courteous breast,

I praise, but seek not yet so soon to rest :

Still shines the day, and 'twere a shame for knight

To lose in sloth the yet-remaining light.

The stranger then—O ! that thy woe-struck mind 670

Could gain as sure each good it pants to find,

As thou, from me thy fill of arms shalt taste,

And find perchance the day too quickly waste.

He said ; and straight two beamy lances, wrought

Like ponderous masts, he bids with speed be brought ;

To bold Marphisa's hand the choice he gives, 676

The spear which she rejects himself receives.

The trumpet sounds—the coursers shake the ground,

Earth, air, and sea, the thundering charge resound.

With eyes unmov'd each mute assistant stands ; 680

No word, no breath, is heard through all the bands :

So fix'd was each to mark with longing gaze,
Which knight would win the palm of knightly praise,
Marphisa aims her spear with matchless force,
To hurl the sable warrior from his horse, 685
No more to rise; nor less the sable foe
Thinks with a thrust to lay Marphisa low.
Like sapless oziers seem'd each lance's length,
Not form'd of chosen ash with massy strength:
Up to the rest they shiver'd with the stroke; 690
And either steed confess'd the mighty shock:
At once, as if a scythe with sweepy force
Had cut the nerves, down sunk each floundering horse.
Marphisa, at her first assault, had known
A thousand warriors from their saddle thrown, 695
And she, who ne'er before receiv'd defeat,
Now (strange to tell!) was tumbled from her seat.
Struck with the chance, with more than rage oppress'd,
A sudden madness seem'd t' enflame her breast:
Alike the sable knight appear'd to grieve, 700
Not lightly wont in field his seat to leave.
Scarce had they touch'd the ground, when either stood
On foot recover'd, and the fight renew'd.
Each weapon's edge and point by turns they ply'd;
With sword and shield they fenc'd, or leapt aside 705
To shun the stroke: the well-aim'd stroke rebounds,
The stroke that miss'd in hissing air resounds.
In secret to herself Marphisa said:
In happy hour for me this warrior stay'd;
Nor in the fight his nine companions led: 710
This day might else have mix'd me with the dead:
Since now, sore labouring in the doubtful strife,
Scarce from his single arm I guard my life.

Marphisa thus, yet ceas'd not as she spoke,
To wield her sword and ward each coming stroke. 715
Not less the stranger thus his fortune bless'd;
In happy hour this knight refus'd to rest:
Since now I scarce defend me from his might,
Already wearied with so fierce a fight.
Had he with morn his vigour lost renew'd 720
What fortune might have then my arms pursu'd!
Great were my risk in this contested place,
Had he accepted late my proffer'd grace.

The battle lasted till declining light,
Nor seem'd th' advantage to the dame or knight; 725
And now so deep the shades increasing grow,
Not this, nor that, can ward the threatening blow.
Now darkness clos'd when to the glorious maid
With courteous mien the generous warrior said.

What can we more, since night obtrudes her veil, 730
While yet the battle hangs in equal scale?
Then hear—O chief! awhile prolong thy life,
At least till morn revives the noble strife:
If to thy wasting days a single night
I only grant—no blame on me must light: 735
Condemn the law of this accursed race,
The female sex that rule this hated place.
But he, from whom no art the truth conceals,
Knows if for thee and thine my bosom feels.
Thou and thy fellows may'st with me reside, 740
With others danger will thy sleep betide.
Against thee now conspire the female train,
Whose husbands by thy conquering hand are slain.
For know that each, who by thy arm lies dead,
Ten wives possess'd: hence ninety females led 745

To seek revenge (unless with me you rest):
Might in the dead of night your sleep molest.

Marphisa then—I gladly shall receive
The fair asylum which thou deign'st to give:
Secure in thee such virtuous faith to find 750
As suits thy courage and exalted mind!

Mourn not my life as doom'd to thee by fate,
Thy own, perchance, may find a shorter date;
Nor can I think as yet thy actions show,
With mine compar'd, thyself a mightier foe. 755
Then, as thou wilt, the combat urge or stay;
Or meet by moon-light, or by light of day:
Whate'er thou seek'st, behold me ready still,
Each hour a warrior's duty to fulfil.

Unfinish'd thus they left the glorious fight, 760
Till from the Ganges shone the golden light.

To Aquilant, to Gryphen, all the train
Of gallant champions, came the knight humane,
With generous suit to each by turns address,
Beneath his hospitable roof to rest. 765

All gladly yield, and now with chearful blaze
Or torches' light, the lord his guests conveys;
They reach his regal dome, where every room
With splendor shone and labours of the loom.

Now from each head the martial helmet rais'd 770
The two brave combatants with wonder gaz'd.

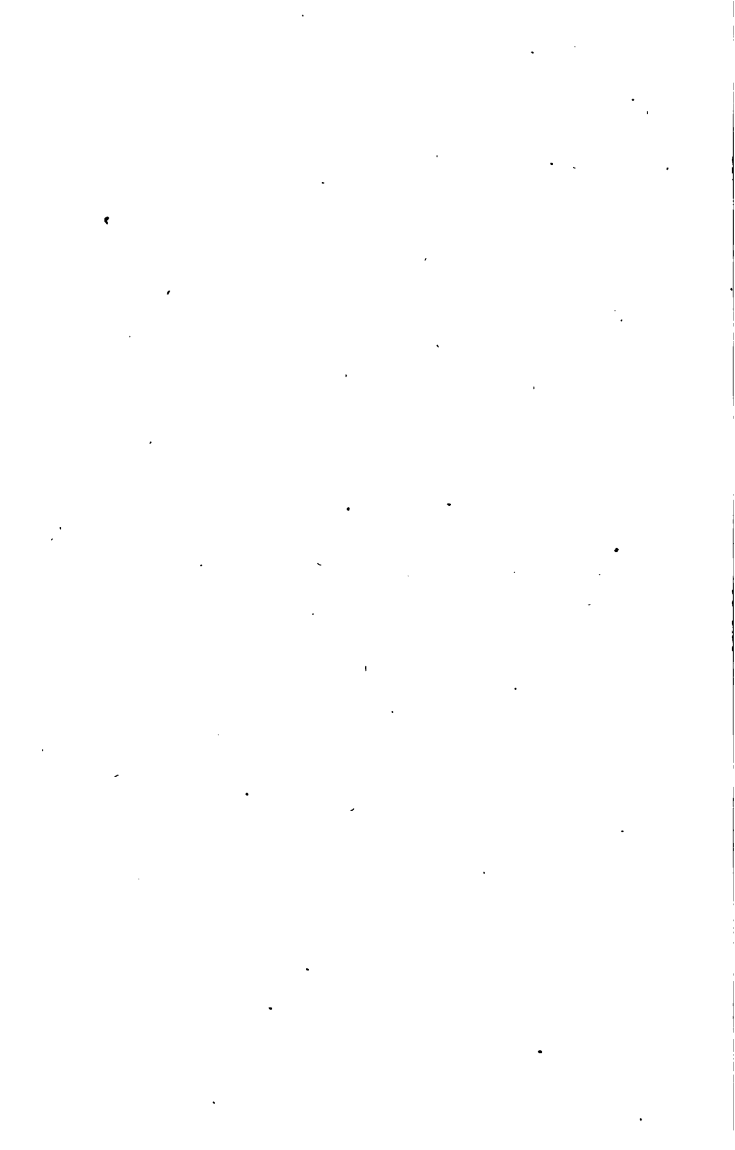
The stranger-knight was fresh and fair of hue,
His downy cheeks but eighteen summers knew.
The virgin marvel'd much his arm could wage
Such dreadful battles in so green an age: 775

Nor less he wonder'd, when her helm unclos'd
Her flowing locks and beauteous sex expos'd,

His foe but late !—now each with like demand
Enquires the other's actions, name, and land.

But who the youth, awhile to seek forbear, 780
The book ensuing shall his name declare.

END OF THE NINETEENTH BOOK.



THE
TWENTIETH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE champion of the Amazons discovers himself to be Guido of the house of Clarmont, and gives an account of the history and first establishment of the Amazon Government. The warriors consult together on the means of quitting the country. Marphisa would persuade them to effect it by force of arms. Guido takes the management upon himself; and next morning they attempt to break through the whole body of the Amazons, but are nearly overpowered by numbers, when Astolpho, blowing his horn, drives all the Amazons before him. Sansonetto, Guido, Gryphon, Aquilant, and Marphisa, being terrified with the rest, precipitately hasten on board the ship prepared for them, and leave Astolpho behind them. The knights and Marphisa afterwards landing, Marphisa parts from the others. Her encounter with Gabrino, Pinabello, and lastly with Zerbino.

THE
TWENTIETH BOOK
 OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

IN fields of battle and the Muses' lore,
 What wonders have been wrought by dames of yore,
 Whose skill in arms and letters spreads their praise
 Throughout the world to their far-distant days!
 Camilla and Harpalice, renown'd 5
 In hardy camps, with wreaths unfading crown'd,
 And Sappho and Corinna, held so high
 For Learning's sacred gifts, shall never die.

Ver. 1. *In fields of battle, &c.*] This introduction seems to have been copied and enlarged by Spenser in his *Fairy Queen*.

Where is the antique glory now become,
 That whilom wont in women to appear?
 Where be the brave achievements done by some?
 Where be the battles, where the shield and spear, &c.?

Book III. C. iv. St. 1.

Ver. 5. *Camilla and Harpalice.*] Camilla, queen of the Volscians, a female warrior, who came to the assistance of Turnus, and was treacherously slain by Aruns. See *Virgil's Æn.* vii. xi. Harpalice was a warlike virgin of Thrace, who, when the Getæ, a people of Scythia, had made her father prisoner, collected together a body of troops with great celerity, suddenly attacked the enemy, cut a great number to pieces, and set her father at liberty.

Ver. 7.—*Sappho and Corinna.*—] Sappho, a well-known poetess, born at Lesbos. See her Epistle to Phaon, in *Ovid*. There were

Oppos'd to man, behold the beauteous race,
In every science, our renown efface ; 10
And each, who turns the leaf of story past,
Shall undiminish'd see their honours last.
Though such examples seem of late to fail,
Not always evil influence shall prevail,
When those, whose writings should their worth reveal,
Through ignorance or envy oft conceal : 16
Yet in our times, I see with joyful eyes
Such countless virtues in the sex arise,
As well may claim the pen and faithful page
To hand them down to every future age. 20
Then slanderers' tongues no more with canker'd speech
Shall taint those glories which they cannot reach ;
But to such height shall soar the female name,
As even to leave behind Marphisa's fame.
To her we now return—The dame address'd 25
The courteous knight, and answer'd his request.
Eager to know the youth, she soon reveal'd
In few, her dreadful name, till then conceal'd :
Marphisa am I call'd !——no more she said,
For fame through every realm the rest had spread. 30
The stranger then—All here, I trust must know
The glorious stock to which my birth I owe !

three of the name of Corinna, all skilled in letters. One was of Thebes, one of Thespis, and the third of Corinth. The last lived at the time, and is supposed to have been the favourite of Ovid ; but the most famous was she who, in a trial of poetry, conquered the great poet Pindar. Her glory seems to have been fully established by the public memorial of her picture exhibited in her native city, and adorned with a symbol of her victory. Pausanias, who saw it, supposes her to have been one of the handsomest women of her age. Time has left us only a few scraps of Corinna's poetry.

Not only France, and Spain, each neighbouring land,
 But Æthiop, Ind, and Pontus' frozen strand,
 Have heard of Clarmont's far-resounding name, 35
 Whence the bold knight* who slew Almontes' came;
 And he†, by whom the fierce Mambrino slain,
 (His kingdom laid in ruin) press'd the plain.
 That blood I boast—and near the Euxine waves,
 Where Isther with his streams the region laves, 40
 To Amon's duke (who on that fated shore
 His wanderings ended), me Constantia bore.
 One year has roll'd, since her, in sorrow lost,
 I left to seek my friends on Gallia's coast:
 But, midst the voyage, rose a stormy wind, 45
 And hither drove me from the port design'd.
 Ten months have past, since here detain'd, I mourn
 The lingering hours, and curse each day's return.
 Guido the Savage, am I call'd—a name
 Scarce yet recorded on the list of fame. 50

* Orlando.

† Rinaldo.

Ver. 49. *Guido the Savage*,—] This character appears to have been introduced by Ariosto, as no such name occurs in Boyardo. Spenser has a knight with the appellation of "Savage knight," which seems given him not from any reproach, but merely to express a disposition inured to hardy feats, and stranger to the softness of a court.

It was a goodly swain, and of great might,
 But in vain shews, that wont young knights bewitch,
 And courtly services took no delight.

*

It was, to weet, the good Sir Satyrane,
 That rang'd abroad, to seek adventures wild,
 As was his wont, in forest and in plain.
 He was all arm'd in rugged steel, unfin'd,
 As in the smoky forge it was compil'd,
 And in his scutcheon bore a satyr's head.

Fairy Queen, B. III. C. vii. St. 29.

Here, with his ten compeers, in listed field,
 I Angelon of Melibæa kill'd.
 Next the soft conflict with the dames I try'd,
 And now ten wedded partners grace my side,
 Whom, fairest, gentlest of the female band 55
 I chose, and rule with uncontroll'd command.
 Thus shall he fare, whom, on the fated day,
 Prevailing Fortune gives the ten to slay.

The warriors question'd Guido, whence so few
 The males appear'd, and why the female crew 60
 Each husband to their sovereign will compell'd,
 When males in other lands dominion held ?
 Then Guido answer'd—Often while detain'd
 I here have liv'd, I heard the cause explain'd,
 And what I heard, shall tell, since you demand. 65 }

Now twice ten years elaps'd, the Grecian bands
 From Troy return'd to view their native lands
 (Ten years the siege endur'd, as many tost
 On adverse seas, they rov'd from coast to coast)
 Arriv'd, they found their wives, who vainly try'd 70
 To bear such absence, had their place supply'd
 With young gallants, whom to their love they led,
 No more to freeze in a forsaken bed.
 The Grecians finding with another's breed
 Their dwellings fill'd, by joint consent agreed 75
 To' excuse th' offence; for each well knew his wife
 Could ne'er so long forget the nuptial life :

Again, in another place.

.....On his shield was writ,

" Salvage sans finesse," shewing secret wit.

This explanation may serve for Ariosto, who has assigned no reason for giving this name to Guido.

B. XX. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 99

But the sad children, born of lawless love,
Must exil'd thence a vagrant fortune prove:
Nor would the husbands so entail disgrace, 80
To nourish, at their cost, a spurious race.
Some were expos'd, and some with better fate
Their mothers kept conceal'd to man's estate.
Some, from their native seats, in various bands,
As chance directed, rov'd to foreign lands. 85
Some arms pursu'd; some chose the students toil;
Some follow'd arts; some plough'd the rustic soil:
These liv'd in courts; those serv'd the herds to rear;
As best it seem'd to her * who governs here.

Departing with the rest, a youth was seen, 90
Of Clytemnestra born, the cruel queen;
His age eighteen, and fresh in bloom, as shows
The lily fair, or newly-gather'd rose.
He, in a ship, with all provision stor'd,
For wealth and prey each creek and coast explor'd. 95
A hundred like himself compos'd his band,
With care selected from the Grecian land.
The Cretans, that Idomeneus expell'd,
The wretched sire, who Crete's dominion held,
And next, collecting arms and troops, prepar'd 100
Their new establish'd state from foes to guard,

* Fortune.

Ver. 99. *The wretched sire,*—] Idomeneus, king of Crete, having vowed, in case he returned in safety from the siege of Troy, to offer up the first object that presented itself, was met by his own son, whom, to keep his vow, he caused to be sacrificed. His subjects, struck with the barbarity of the action, banished him from his kingdom. See the whole story at full in Telemachus, Book V.

Engag'd Phalantus (so the youth was nam'd)
With ample stipends, as his merits claim'd,
To serve their soldier, while his comrades all
With him they join'd to guard Dictamnum's wall. 105

A hundred cities grac'd the Cretan lands,
But chief above the rest Dictamnum stands,
Wealthy and fair, renown'd for amorous dames
Of lovely form, for pleasures, sports, and games.

The dames, accusom'd kindly to receive 110
Each foreign guest, to these such welcome give,
That little wanted to the Grecian train
O'er every house to hold their boundless reign.
Vigorous as fair, the youths their ardour prove
In blending raptures, as in kindling love. 115

To win the fair a few short days suffic'd,
Till these o'er every joy their lovers priz'd.

Now peace restor'd, Phalantus was releas'd
From warlike cares, the soldier's labour ceas'd,
And every hope of future stipends o'er, 120

The youths decreed to quit the Cretan shore.

The mourning females tears incessant shed,
As if they view'd their dearest parents dead :

Full oft apart they urg'd them to remain ;
But when they found each fond entreaty vain, 125

Resolv'd with them their voyage to partake,
Their brothers, sires, and children they forsake,
While from her home each bears, by wary stealth,
Rich gems of price, and countless sums of wealth ;
And with such secret care her dwelling leaves, 130

That not a man of Crete their flight perceives.
So prosperous was the hour, so swift the wind.
So well Phalantus had their course design'd,

B. XX. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 101

That many a league his vessel plough'd the tide,
 Ere those of Crete their heavy loss descry'd. 135
 At length this fated strand; then scarcely prest
 By foot of mortals, gave the wanderers rest.
 Securely here they stay'd, and here awhile
 At leisure weigh'd the profits of their guile.
 Ten days to them this region seem'd a seat 110
 Of amorous pleasures, and a blest retreat :
 But, as it oft befalls, the fullest joy,
 In youthful bosoms, sooner tends to cloy.
 All now agreed to free them from the charge
 Of female mates, and live again at large. 145
 For fickle man ill brooks the heavy lot,
 To keep the woman when the love's forgot !
 Eager of rapine, ready to contend
 For ravag'd wealth, but little prone to spend,
 They saw a troop, so numerous and so fair, 150
 Requir'd far other than a soldier's care.
 For this, their wretched partners they forsook,
 And loaded with their spoils, their course they took
 To where, in Puglia, near the sea-beat shores,
 They founded fair Tarentum's future towers. 155
 The dames, abandon'd on a desert coast,
 Betray'd by those in whom they trusted most,
 Along the sands some days in silent grief
 Like statues stood ; but finding no relief
 From plaints or tears, they turn'd them to debate, 160
 What means might best relieve their hapless state :
 When, what her thoughts suggested, each disclos'd :
 Some to regain their native Crete propos'd,
 And rather dare the worst they might engage
 From a wrong'd husband or a father's rage, 165

Than hid in deserts, or in forests lie, -
With want to linger, or with famine die.
Some said, they never to such shame would bend,
But rather, plung'd in seas, their being end ;
And urg'd it better far, with honour lost, 170
Though poor, or slaves, to rove from coast to coast,
Than willing victims, to their native clime
Returning, meet the sentence of their crime.

Such wretched thoughts, and still more wretched, rose
In every breast, from sense of present woes. 175

At length a female, Oronthea nam'd,
Stood forth, who kindred from king Minos claim'd :
The youngest, fairest of the beauteous band,
Less guilty she, of all who left the land,
To brave Phalantus had her virgin charms 180
Resign'd, and fled for him her parents' arms.

Now while her speech and outward looks express'd
The indignation of a generous breast,
She first condemn'd what each had singly mov'd,
Then urg'd that counsel which the rest approv'd. 185

She will'd them there to dwell, for there they found
A wholesome air, and fields with plenty crown'd ;
Clear silver streams, that through the country stray'd,
Rich spreading meads, and forests thick with shade ;
Fair ports and bays, that from the stormy wave 190
To wandering seamen ready shelter gave ;
That now from Afric, now from Egypt brought
Their barks, with every store and treasure fraught.
She urg'd them there t' abide, and for the sake
Of those who wrong'd them, heavy vengeance take 195
On all the sex ; and every vessel tost
By tempests, driven to shelter on the coast,

Pillage and burn, assail with fire and steel,
Nor let a single life their mercy feel.

Thus counsell'd she—till all alike inflam'd 200
With cruel thoughts, the new-made law proclaim'd.

When winds fore-run a storm, the desperate train
Of females arm'd, rush headlong to the main:
Their fury ruthless Oronthea guides,
Who, made their queen, above the rest presides. 205

Whate'er devoted strangers touch the strand,
But 'scape the seas to perish by the hand
Of mad revenge, where fire and sword assail
Till not a wretch remains to tell the tale.

Thus some few years the widow'd females show 210
A settled hate of man, their mortal foe.

But, should they still persist, they soon must find
Certain destruction hovering o'er their kind.

Should no young offspring from themselves descend,
Their state, their name, their vengeance soon must
end, 215

Which to remotest times they labour'd to extend.

Their rigour then relax'd, and every crew
Explor'd with care that to their region drew
In four succeeding years, from these, at length,
Ten knights they chose, of manly form and strength;
Whose youthful vigour, bred in amorous games, 221
Suffic'd to meet in love their hundred dames.

A hundred form'd their whole, and every ten
One husband claim'd: but e'er the chosen men
Their safety found, what numbers lost their life; 225
All found unequal to the arduous strife.

The ten, in trial well approv'd, they take,
And partners of their bed and kingdom make;

But swear them first, that every wanderer led,
Of every rank, those hapless shores to tread, 230
Without distinction by their swords shall fall,
And one remorseless slaughter swallow all.

The dames, now pregnant grown, began with fear
To view the day of their delivery near,
Lest in succeeding time the numbers born 235
Of issue male, should hold their law in scorn;
And they, at length, behold in evil hour
To hated man revert their darling power.
For this they sought such danger to repel,
Ere years had taught their children to rebel 240
And threat their freedom; hence a law decreed
The mother's care one only male should breed.
Their new-born sons from shore to shore they sent,
With charge to those who thus commission'd went,
To' exchange the boys for girls in distant lands, 245
Or not, at least; return with empty hands.
Nor had the dames in mere compassion spar'd
A single man, save but their herds to guard,
And keep alive their name; and thus was shown
Their law's stern mercy to themselves alone! 250
All others felt its rage, one only grace
The strangers found, that when they reach'd the place }
They fell not all at once beneath this cruel race.
If ten, if twenty, or if more arriv'd,
In chains they lay, of liberty depriv'd; 255
Whence every day was drawn, by fate decreed,
A wretch devoted in the fane to bleed;
Where, in the midst, by Oronthea rear'd,
A dreadful altar to Revenge appear'd,

While nam'd by lot, one held the ready knife, 260
To shed, in sacrifice, his comrade's life.

Long years had past, when to th' inhuman shore
A noble youth his luckless fortune bore;
From great Alcides' stock his birth he claim'd,
In arms experienc'd, and Elbanio nam'd. 265

Him, careless of a foe, and unprepar'd,
At once they seiz'd, and with a numerous guard,
With all his crew, detain'd in cruel thrall,
Sad victims destin'd by their laws to fall.

Fair was the youth, of semblance rarely seen, 270
Of graceful carriage and commanding mien;

So from his lips the honey'd accents broke,
That venom'd asps might listen while he spoke:

From fame the news of his arrival caught,
To Alexandra's gentle ear was brought; 275

Fair Alexandra born of her who sway'd
The sceptre still, though now with years decay'd:

Still Oronthea liv'd, but none surviv'd,

Save her alone, of all that first arriv'd;

While as their years increas'd the female crew 280
Increas'd in strength, and in dominion grew.

Ten knights, renown'd for deeds of arms achiev'd,
With hostile welcome, all that came, receiv'd.

Now Alexandra, eager to behold

A youth whose praise report so loudly told, 285
To Oronthea her request preferr'd,

And saw Elbanio, and his converse heard.

But when she sought to go, her virgin heart

Felt the first throbbing of an amorous smart.

In vain she struggled: she at length remain'd 290

A helpless prisoner by her captive chain'd.

Elbanio then—O fairest of thy kind !
 If pity here could e'er reception find,
 Pity, which dwells where'er the sun display'd,
 Gives tints to objects, and gives light to shade, 295
 Fain would I now (by those transcendent charms
 Whose powerful influence every gazer warms)
 From thee request my life, that what I owe
 To thee prolong'd, for thee I might bestow :
 But if dire fury here the virgin steels 300
 To each soft passion human nature feels,
 I ask not life—such hopes I know are vain,
 But let me yet a warrior's right obtain.
 Whate'er my fate—O ! give me but to wield
 My glorious arms, and die with spear and shield ! 305
 Not like some criminal whom laws arraign,
 Or brutal beast before the altar slain.

Fair Alexandra, in whose lovely eyes
 Compassion pleaded for the youth, replies.

Though savage is our land, more cruel known 310
 Than every realm, yet think not I shall own
 Each woman a Medea—were the mind
 Of all our females in destruction join'd,
 Yet I alone would rise above my kind :
 Or if, like many a soul with fury steel'd, 315
 I seem'd till now unknowing how to yield,
 Till thy arrival here, perchance there came
 No stranger that might equal favour claim.
 But sure, some tigress has my soul inflam'd,
 And more than adamant my bosom fram'd ; 320
 If when I view thy valour, form, and age,
 Compassion chase not all vindictive rage.

O ! would to Heaven I might as well arrest
Th' inhuman law, that binds each wretched guest,
As freely now my death I would receive, 325
And, with my own, thy better life reprieve !
But here no rank avails to break thy chain,
And what thou ask'st, though little, hard to gain :
Yet all I can—expect—while much I dread
New sufferings hang o'er thy devoted head ! 330

Let me but meet (Elbanio thus rejoin'd)
The ten in arms—so firm my heart I find,
I trust t' escape with life the bloody fray,
And every foe, though trebly arm'd, to slay.
To this the virgin-fair made no reply, 335
But from her bosom drew a tender sigh.
She went, and parting, in her heart she found
A thousand shafts, and each a cureless wound ;
Then sought her mother, and with earnest prayer
Inclin'd the queen the noble youth to spare ; 340
On this condition, that in listed fight
The ten should perish by his single might.

Queen Oronthea then the female train
To council call'd, and thus her speech began.
From every crew whom chance may hither send, 345
We still should place the bravest to defend
Our port and shores : by trial must we chuse,
What fits our wants to take, and what refuse,
Lest, to our wrong, the coward soul should rise
To reign amongst us, while the valiant dies. 350
If with my judgment, you, O friends ! agree,
Let us henceforth a sovereign law decree,
That every knight, by fortune hither led,
Ere in the dreadful fane his blood we shed,

Shall (in such compact if he dares engage) 355

At once with ten the combat singly wage;
And should he conquer all, he, with a train
Of chosen others, shall our guard maintain.

Thus far I speak, since in our prison lies
A captive, who to battle ten defies. 360

Should he their equal prove—forbid it Heaven!
But to such worth some favour should be given:
Or should he fail in what he rashly dares,
He meets the punishment himself prepares.

Thus Oronthea to the council said, 365
When from the eldest one this answer made.

Th' important cause whence we to change began
Our first design, and commerce hold with man,
Was not to guard our state from foreign bands;
For this our constant souls, our valiant hands, 370
Might well suffice—O! could we but extend
Our race as well, which time, alas! must end
Without the help of man—and hence we make
Our choice of youths, but only one we take
To wed ten dames, lest man the sovereign sway 375
From us should rend, and we in turn obey.

We need not mauls our empire to defend,
But must for progeny on these depend.
In this alone their prowess we require,
Nor other aid, nor other task desire. 380

To keep a chief whose nervous limbs combine
The strength of ten, must frustrate our design.
If such a troop his single arm can slay,
How many women shall he hold at bay?
Were such our present ten, one fatal hour 385
Had to themselves transferr'd the ruling power.

Ill suits it us, who wish to hold command,
T' entrust our weapons in a stranger's hand.
Grant that thy boasted youth so far succeed,
That by his arm our chosen ten should bleed; 390
A hundred women, widow'd by his sword,
Shall see their husbands' deaths with tears deplor'd:
Then, should he 'scape with life, let him fulfil
Far other task than ten brave youths to kill:
(If with a hundred dames he will supply 395
The place of those they mourn, he shall not die.

Artemia thus her cruel thoughts display'd,
(So was she nam'd) and had her counsel sway'd,
Elbanio, in the temple's dire abodes,
Had fall'n a victim to th' infernal gods. 400
But Oronthea, with a mother's love,
Reply'd, and every hearer's mind to move,
Such reasons urg'd, that most, with one consent,
Their suff'rage yielded for the queen's content.
Elbanio's matchless graces deep imprest, 405
With powerful charm in every youthful breast,
Against those elders weigh'd, whose ruthless mind
With fierce Artemia's rig'rous sentence join'd
T' enforce their ancient law; while some agreed
(No terms premis'd) Elbanio should be freed. 410
At length 'twas fix'd, the youth should grace obtain,
When in the list his arm the ten had slain;
And next, not with a hundred consorts try'd
A husband's fondness, but with ten supply'd.

Th' ensuing day, to liberty restor'd, 415
The knight receiv'd his armour, steed and sword:
Alone against the warrior ten he stood,
And one by one he shed their vital blood:

At night, to show in Cupid's school his art,
 With ten fair dames he play'd the lover's part; 420
 Who, taught by him connubial joys to prove,
 All rose experienc'd votaries of love.

For this the youth with Oronthea won
 Such added grace, she chose him for her son,
 And gave him Alexandra's charms to wed; 425
 With her the other nine, all whom he led,
 Ten virgins late to share his genial bed.
 She left the youth with Alexandra fair,
 (From whom the land was nam'd) her kingdom's
 heir,

On this condition, that his future reign 430
 Might still this statute through the realm maintain;
 That every wanderer there should lose his life,
 Or meet ten warriors in unequal strife;
 Those could he first in dangerous combat foil,
 Then find, with ten fair dames, his fortune smile; 435
 O'er these he should preside, and at his will
 Dismiss his consorts, or their places fill;
 And hold the sway, till to the land arriv'd
 Some foreign knight that him of life depriv'd.

Two thousand years have roll'd, since first was
 plann'd 440

This hateful law, and still it rules the land.
 Few days elapse, but, for a sacrifice,
 Some hapless stranger in the temple dies.
 Oft when, as chance directs, a fearless knight
 Dares, like Elbanio, arm him for the fight, 445
 Before th' opponent's foot his life he lays,
 And, ah! how rare the second proof essays:

Such have been found, but such so rare befel,
That on the fingers we their names may tell.
Of these was Argillan—but little space 450
He with his wives maintain'd the sovereign place;
For hither driven by tempests from the deep,
I clos'd his eyes in everlasting sleep.
O had I shar'd that day his envy'd death,
And not prolong'd in bonds a shameful breath! 455
Gay pleasure, smiling sports, and amorous toys;
Each soft delight that youth like mine employs;
Rich vests and jewels that the person grace;
And, midst his peers, pre-eminence of place,
Heaven knows avail but little him, who crost 460
By envious Fortune, has his freedom lost!
Ah! wretch! that while I thus my bonds deplore,
Must never hope to quit this hateful shore!
To see vile sloth my fairest flower destroy
In prime of life, embitters every joy. 465
The fame of Clarmont wide her wings extends
To highest heaven from earth's remotest ends!
O! to my brethren's could I join my name,
My deeds with theirs might honour's portion claim!
Hard is my lot, condemn'd a life to lead 470
In such vile service, like the wretched steed,
That blind, or lame, or with enfeebled force,
Unfit for battle or the dusty course,
Is with his fellow-brutes, that turn the soil,
Condemn'd to every task of servile toil! 475

Ver. 449. *That on the fingers, &c.*—] A ludicrous expression to denote how few adventurers had been successful in their trial with the Amazons. The words are literal from the Italian.

Since death alone from such detested thrall
Can set me free, on welcome death I call.

Here Guido clos'd his tale, and curs'd the day
That gave him o'er the land detested sway ;
Gave him from either field the prize to bear, 480
To slay the champions, and to please the fair.

Astolpho silent stood, awhile conceal'd,
Till now by many a certain mark reveal'd,
In him his kinsman Guido well he knew,
Who by an alien's bed his birth from Amon drew. 485

Then thus—Behold the English duke confess'd,
Thy own Astolpho here—he said, and press'd
The youthful champion with a close embrace,
While tears of pleasure trickled down his face.
What proof so certain, could we here receive? 490
What proof, dear kinsman, could thy mother leave
To speak thy birth, like what thy sword has shown
In glorious fight, to stamp thee for our own?

Guido, in every land, save this, had view'd,
With joyful greeting, one so near in blood ; 495
But saw him now with grief, since well he knew
The conquest his, destruction must ensue
To England's noble knight: Astolpho freed
From fear of death or chains, himself must bleed ;
Where this good fortune finds, to that must ill succeed. }
He mourn'd, that when his arm had won the fight, 500
Eternal bonds must wait each hapless knight ;
Nor (should he perish in the doubtful strife)
Could each in freedom better hold his life.

B. XX. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 113

If in the first their champion's arms prevail, 505
A female in the second field must fail.

Marphisa hence would conquer him in vain,
When victim she must fall, and captives they remain.

No less the valour of the generous youth,
His early manhood and heroic truth, 510

Such pity kindled in Marphisa's breast,
Such thoughts inspir'd in every valiant guest,
That freedom which his death alone could give,
On terms like these they wish'd not to receive;

And if Marphisa with his life must buy 515
Her comrades' safety, she with him would die.

To Guido then—Unite thee to our band,
And let us quit by force this hated land.
Such hopes, alas! are fruitless (he reply'd),
Our combat only must our fate decide : 520

Then she—This heart through fear shall never shrink
The glorious task my arms have thus begun :

Nor know I any safer means to try,
Than what my sword and own right hand supply.
Such in the battle have I prov'd thy might, 525
With thee I dare the most unequal fight.

When, on to-morrow's sun, the vulgar crew
Shall throng the theatre our joust to view,
Let us on all our deathful rage dispense,
On those that fly, and those that make defence ; 530
To wolves and vultures cast their bodies dead,
And see the flames on all their city spread.

Behold me ready (fearless Guido cry'd)
To join thy arms, and perish by thy side:
But never must we hope with life to fly ; 535
Suffice that unreveng'd we shall not die.

Oft have I told of this inhuman race,
 Ten thousand females in the crowded space:
 As many guard the castle, walls, and strand,
 That none, unquestion'd, can depart the land. 540

To whom Marphisa—Be their numbers more
 Than Xerxes muster'd on the Grecian shore:
 Than those rebellious spirits, justly driven
 To endless pains from blissful seats of heaven,
 Be thou my aid—at least, assist not those; 545
 One day shall see me rout this host of foes.

Then Guido—Hear what haply may prevail,
 All other means are vain if this should fail:
 Know, none but females ever make resort
 To view the harbour or frequent the port. 550
 Of all my wives, in one I chief confide,
 By many a proof of long affection try'd.
 Alike with me, would she desire to break
 My slavish bonds, could she my flight partake,
 So from her rivals might she hope to prove 555
 The single partner of my future love:
 She in the bay, ere morn has clear'd the air
 From murky shade, a pinnace shall prepare,
 Which, amply stor'd, your mariners shall find
 To plough the deep and catch the favouring wind. 560

Ver. 543. *Than those rebellious spirits,—*] Some critics have condemned Ariosto for making Marphisa a Pagan (or rather Mahometan) allude to the fate of the angels, one of the traditions of the Christian church: but to this it may be answered, that the Mahometan religion has adopted many tenets of the Mosaic and Christian faith; and that, among others, the Koran refers to the rebellion in heaven.

You close behind my guiding steps pursue,
Knights, merchants, seamen, (a determin'd crew)
United firmly; every welcome guest
That here has deign'd beneath my roof to rest.
Should aught oppose to intercept our course, 565
Your arms and valour must a passage force;
And thus, I trust, with spear and sword in hand,
To set you free from this detested land.

Act as thou wilt (Marphisa thus reply'd),
I for my safety in myself confide. 570
First by this trusty weapon's edge shall fall
Each foe enclos'd within this fatal wall,
Ere any eye behold me flying here,
Or aught, that in this bosom argues fear:
Let me, with dint of arms, by day depart: 575
All other ways ill suit the dauntless heart.
Yet were my sex disclos'd, a woman's name
Would fair regard from every female claim.
Here might I dwell esteem'd in highest grace,
And midst their senate hold an honour'd place; 580
But since with these I came, with these to share
One common fortune is alone my care;
Nor would I poorly freedom here retain,
Or hence depart while these in bonds remain.

Marphisa thus, and by her words made known, 585
That more her comrades' safety than her own
Restrain'd her ardour; lest on them should fall
Those mischiefs, which she sought t' avert from all.
Else had she loosen'd on the female kind
Her generous wrath; but now with cooler mind 590
To Guido's conduct she the day resign'd. }

Guido, by night, his faithful dame address'd,
 Aleria, of his consorts lov'd the best :
 Nor needed much to move her gentle mind
 To second what her dearest lord design'd. 595
 A ship she chose with due provisions stor'd,
 And all her wealthiest treasures plac'd on board ;
 Then with her comrades, feign'd at morning break,
 In search of spoil a venturous cruise to make.
 Meanwhile, beneath her roof she bade prepare 600
 Spears, bucklers, swords, each implement of war ;
 With these against th' unnumber'd foes to stand,
 To arm the merchants and the sailor band.
 All night, against surprise, the guard they keep,
 By turns they hold the watch, by turns they sleep ; 605
 And sheath'd in armour wait, with longing eyes
 To see the dawning red in eastern skies.
 Scarce had the day begun with beamy light
 To chase from earth the gloomy veil of night :
 Scarce had the offspring of Lycaon driven 610
 The early ploughshare through the fields of Heaven,
 When in the theatre, the female throng,
 To view the combat, pour'd in heaps along :
 Thus, o'er the threshold of their peopled hive,
 When spring returns, the bees in clusters drive. 615

Ver. 610. *Scarce had the offspring of Lycaon—*] By the offspring of Lycaon, the poet means Arcas, son of Calisto, and grandson of Lycaon, said to be placed among the stars, and called Bootes. He is feigned by the poets to be a husbandman in heaven, and to drive the northern wain, here, perhaps, by rather a forced construction, supposed to have been a plough.

See *Ovid. Met. B. II.*

With trumpets, drums, and horns, that echo'd round,
The tumult thickens; earth and skies resound;
While thus their lord they summon'd to the fight,
To end his battle with the stranger knight.

In armour Guido, Sansonetto came, 620
Gryphon, and Aquilant, the martial dame*,
With England's duke †; and next a mingled crowd,
Some march'd on foot, and some the steed bestrode.
From Guido's dwelling, to the port and bay,
Their passage through the list of combat lay. 625
Thus said the youth, and urg'd the valiant crew
His bold example fearless to pursue.

Silent he led them on, resolv'd to dare
The dreadful trial in the public square.
He enter'd now, a hundred in his train, 630
And eager strove the adverse gate to gain;
In vain he strove, while countless throngs enclos'd,
And with their glittering arms his course oppos'd.

Soon as they saw him head his following band,
They deem'd he meant with those to leave the land: 635
At once they seiz'd their bows, their shafts prepar'd,
And swiftly rush'd the portal's pass to guard.
Guido, his bold compeers with dauntless breast,
But chief Marphisa, brave above the rest,
Forget not now their dreadful swords to ply, 640
And every means to force the passage try.

* Marphisa.

† Astolpho.

Ver. 618. *While thus their lord, &c.*] — By this is meant Guido, who, as the poet tells us, for his singular valour had obtained a kind of sovereignty over the Amazons.

But now so thick the arrows rain around,
 That wounded some, some lifeless press the ground.
 Deep, and more deep, th' unequal conflict grows,
 Till valour shrinks before such host of foes : 645
 In happy time each warrior's temper'd arms
 Defend his bosom from invading harms.
 Beneath him Sansonetto's steed is slain,
 And near him falls Marphisa's on the plain :
 Then thus Astolpho thought—What dangerous hour 650
 Can better claim my horn's subduing power ?
 Since all our swords avail not—let us prove
 If this, as wont, can every fear remove.

Thus he, and to the horn his mouth applies ;
 The earth resounds, and echoes rend the skies. 655
 Each startled breast is seiz'd with sudden fright,
 Each ready foot is turn'd to speedy flight ;
 These from their seats aghast and trembling fall,
 Those undefended leave the gates and wall.
 As, when deep slumber every eyelid seals, 660
 Where, by degrees, the flame close lurking steals
 From beam to beam, till all around it preys ;
 Sudden awaken'd in the fiery blaze,
 From room to room the shrieking wretches fly,
 From roofs and windows leap, while from on high
 Some 'scape by falling, some by falling die. 666 }
 Thus, careless of her life, and wild with fear,
 Each flies the sound that thunders in her ear.
 At every gate at once a thousand press ;
 Heaps fall on heaps ; the driving throngs increase, 670
 And choak the passage : numbers trod beneath
 Are slain ; and numbers meet untimely death

From gates or ramparts cast: one sudden dies;
One, with crush'd limbs a lingering victim lies!

Dire is the tumult, mingled cries ascend, 675
And loud laments the starry regions rend.

Where'er the horn is heard, they speed their pace;
Nor wonder if the vile ignoble race

With coward looks and panting hearts appear,
Since Nature forms the dastard hare to fear: 680

But how of bold Marphisa shall I tell?

Of Guido Savage, prov'd in fight so well?

Of Olivero's* sons, whose martial praise

Such lasting honours to their house could raise:

Who late whole armies view'd with fearless eye, 685

And now, bereft of courage, trembling fly?

They fly like timorous doves, or helpless deer,

What time some strange approaching noise they hear

To every friend and foe alike is found

The spelful terror of the magic sound: 690

Guido the brave, and Sansonetto, yield;

The brethren*, and Marphisa lately steel'd

To every chance, attempt to shun in vain

The fearful din which still their ears retain.

Meantime Astolpho through the city goes, 695

And with new breath his horn terrific blows.

One gains the sea; one climbs the mountain's side,

And one in gloomy forests seeks to hide.

Some traverse many a league of country o'er,

And some review their native seats no more: 700

While some t' escape from land, would stem the wave,

And find in ruthless seas a wat'ry grave.

Each house, or dome, is now an empty space,
And all the city shows a desert place.

Marphisa, Guido bold, the brethren two 705
Gryphon and Aquilant their flight pursue;
With these the merchants and the sailor train,
In equal terror thron'g the beaten plain;
And now they come, where near the castle rides
A vessel which Aleria's care provides : 710
With speed embarki'g, they forsake the shore,
Hoist every sail, and bend to every oar.

The city clear'd, Astolpho seeks the strand,
In hopes again to join his social band.
Now here, now there he turns, but views in vain 715
Th' abandon'd port, till casting tow'rd's the main
His eager eyes, at distance far he sees
The vessel sail before the favouring breeze!
Forsaken thus, he other thoughts revolves
To quit the realm; and many a scheme resolves. 720
But let him go, nor heed though thus we make
The gentle duke his lonely journey take
Through barbarous realms, and unbelieving lands,
Where constant danger constant fear demands.
Yet wherefore should he fear, whose horn display'd, 725
In every danger brings resistless aid?

Now let his frightened friends our care divide,
Who quit the land, and plough th' unstable tide.
Full swell their sails, till distant from the shore
The horn, so late their dread, is heard no more! 730
One terror now dispell'd, the fear of blame
In every feature lights the glow of shame :

Ver. 721. *But let him go, &c.*] He follows him, Book xxii.
ver. 31.

They dare not meet their comrades' eyes, but stand,
With down-cast eyes, a mute dejected band.

The pilot, on his course by Cyprus glides, 735
By fertile Rhodes; and cuts th' Egean tides.

A hundred islands vanish from his sight;
With these the Malean cape, a dangerous height.

Then scudding onward, with a steady wind,
He leaves the Greek Morea far behind. 740

From Sicily, the Tyrrhene surges crost,
He sails by Italy's delightful coast;

And now to Luna's wish'd-for port he bends,
And hails his home and long forsaken friends;
In thanks to Heaven for all his trials o'er, 745
By storms at sea and perils on the shore.

The warriors here with bold Marphisa find,
In happy time, a ship for France design'd.
The pilot these invites: the willing train
That day embarking, soon Marseilles they gain. 750

It chanc'd that Bradamant, whose noble hand
Deputed rul'd, was absent from the land:
Else had they, by the generous maid detain'd,
Beneath her friendly roof awhile remain'd.
They quit the ship—Marphisa bids adieu 755
To Guido's dame, to all the knightly crew.

It ill beseem'd, in one same troop (she cry'd)
To view so many knights of valour try'd:
While doves and storks are seen together join'd,
And deer and stags, with all the timorous kind; 760

The falcon fierce, the royal eagle's race,
That ne'er in others hopes of safety place,
Bears, lions, tigers, beasts that know not fear,
Unaided still, and single still appear.

Such were her words, though not alike they weigh'd
 With all the rest; but hence the wondrous maid 766
 The champions leaves, and travels thence, alone,
 Through unfrequented woods and paths unknown.
 Gryphon the white, and Aquilant the black,
 Guido and Sansonetto find the track 770
 That to a castle led, whose courteous lord
 Gave each a welcome to his bed and board:
 Courteous at least he seem'd, while each deceiv'd,
 His plausible words and semblance fair believ'd;
 But, soon as sleep at night their eyes oppress'd, 775
 He seiz'd them while they lay secure at rest;
 Nor from the captives would their chains withdraw,
 Till each had sworn t' observe a cruel law.

But ere we further speak what these befel,
 The deeds of brave Marphisa let us tell. 780
 Druenza past, the Seine and Rhodan's stream,
 At length she near a lofty mountain came:
 There by a flood, with sudden waters swell'd,
 An aged dame in sable weeds beheld:
 With travel spent she seem'd, and sore-distrest, 785
 But more with heavy thought than toil oppress'd.
 Lo! this was she, who far from haunts of men,
 Had liv'd with outlaws in the savage den;
 Where Heaven the Paladin Orlando drew,
 To wreak full justice on that impious crew. 790
 The beldame fearing death (and why such fate
 She seem'd to fear, the sequel shall relate)
 Through fields and forests fled remote from sight,
 And shunn'd to meet the face of hind or knight.

She sees the vesture of the martial dame, 795
With foreign arms, a stranger born proclaim ;
And hence she flies not, as she flies from those
Whose garb a warrior of the country shows.
Beside the stream she waits, and now she meets
Th' approaching knight, and low saluting, greets, 800
Beseeching, on his steed to waft her o'er
Th' opposing torrent to the further shore.

Marphisa, courteous from her earliest years,
Across the flood the ancient beldame bears,
And, past the ford, disdains not to convey 805
Behind her courser, till they pass'd a way'
Heavy with slough—when clad in armour bright,
With trappings rich they met an unknown knight,
Gay pacing tow'rds the stream ; with him a dame,
And single squire (his sole attendant) came. 810
Fair was the dame he brought, but fair in vain,
Her haughty carriage cast a deepening stain
On all her beauty, while her scorn and pride
Seem'd well-befitting him that grac'd her side.

This knight was Pinabel, whose treach'ry gave 815
To Bradamant the fall in Merlin's cave.
His sighs were breath'd, his scalding tears were shed
For her, whom now beneath his care he led ;
For her, whom then the magic tower detain'd :
But when Atlantes' guile no more restrain'd 820
His captives, freed by brave Dordona's * dame,
She, not unmindful of her former flame,
To Pinabel return'd, and with him still
Wander'd from tower to tower, o'er forest, dale, and hill.

* Bradamant.

Soon as she view'd Marphisa's aged crone, 825
The shameless fair, to taunting ever prone,
No more the venom of her tongue suppress'd,
But gave full vent to many a scornful jest.
Then brave Marphisa, little us'd to bear
Another's insult, or unpunish'd hear, 830
Inflam'd with anger, to the dame replies :
His partner should with her dispute the prize
Of beauty's bloom, with offer on her knight
To vouch the proof; and these the terms of fight,
That, if o'erthrown her lover press'd the field, 835
The damsel should her vest and palfrey yield.

Here Pinabello, rous'd by sense of shame, 'T
T' accept the challenge and defend his dame,
His spear and buckler seizing, wheel'd his steed,
And on Marphisa rush'd with wrathful speed. 840
Her mighty spear in rest Marphisa held,
And full on Pinabello's helm impell'd
The forceful stroke that hurl'd him to the plain,
Where stunn'd he lay, as number'd with the slain.
At length he rose; when, victor of the day, 845
Marphisa from the stranger rent away
Her glittering ornaments and youthful vest,
And with the spoils her aged beldame dress'd;
Then on the palfrey plac'd, which late before,
With other grace, the haughty damsel bore. 850
This done, she turn'd, the way with her to hold,
Who seem'd by dress still more deform'd and old.

Three days they journey'd on, ere aught befel
In length of travel, worthy here to tell.
The fourth they met a knight, who bent on speed, 855
With goring rowels urg'd his flying steed :

B. XX: ORLANDO FURIOSO. 125

Zerbino nam'd, the king of Scotland's son,
For manly beauty fan'd and battles won :
Of vengeance late defrauded on the hand,
Who dar'd his godlike mercy to withstand. 860

In vain Zerbino long, incens'd, pursu'd
The bold offender through the devious wood,
Who knew so well to wind each tangled brake,
So well th' advantage of the ground to take,
That, shelter'd by surrounding shade, and veil'd 865
In misty vapours by the morn exhal'd,
He 'scap'd pursuit, resolv'd himself to hide,
Till time should bid his prince's wrath subside.

Though ill-dispos'd, Zerbino could not hold
From laughter, when he view'd the beldame old, 870
Whose youthful habit seem'd so ill to grace
Her doating age, and wither'd homely face.

Then to Marphisa, prancing at her side:
Thy prudence merits praise, Sir Knight (he cry'd)
That chusing for thy mate so fair a dame, 875
Thou need'st not fear a rival in thy flame.

By sallow hue, and wrinkled skin appears
Th' ill-favour'd hag beyond the Sybil's years.
A grandame ape she looks, in gamesome sort,
With vesture clad to make the vulgar sport: 880

Her eyes askance, with spite and anger roll'd :
What hurts a woman more than to be told
The world entitle her deform'd and old. }

The noble maid, here feigning wrath, to try
What haply might ensue, made this reply. 885

Ver. 877.--*wrinkled skin appears*

Th' ill-favour'd hag--] Dolce, the Italian commentator, here gravely observes, that the poet particularly dwells on this circumstance, to denote the years of Gabrina: and sagely concludes, that wrinkles are a mark of old age!

She whom I guard, I swear by Heaven, has more
Of beauty's claim than thou of courteous lore.
Thou seem'st to her transcendant graces blind,
To veil the baseness of thy dastard mind.
What other knight that here should chance to meet 890
A maid so young, in every charm complete,
By one defended, but his strength would prove
To win in her the sweet reward of love?

So well with thee she suits (Zerbino cries)
'Twere much injustice to dispute the prize; 895
Nor shall I, lost to sense, my arms employ
In such a cause—thou, what thou hast, enjoy.
Yet, if thou seek'st with me in fight to join,
On other terms I shall not this decline.
But think me not so blinded, for her sake 900
In listed field a single lance to break.
Homely or fair, with thee she shall abide,
Nor will I love, so aptly pair'd, divide.
Heaven knows you both are join'd beyond compare,
If thou art valiant as the nymph is fair. 905

Marphisa then rejoin'd—In thy despite,
To win this damsel must thou prove the fight:
Ne'er shalt thou view her beauties with desire,
And not to win those peerless charms aspire.

I know not who (Zerbino made reply) 910
For such a conquest would the combat try;
Where courting danger with unfruitful pains,
The victor loses while the vanquish'd gains.

Since terms like these displease thee, hear me make
Another offer which thou well may'st take; 915
(Marphisa answer'd) if in joust, to thine
My arms submit, this dame shall still be mine;

But, if I conquer, her thou shalt receive;
Thus be our trial who the prize shall leave.
Should Fortune bid thee now resign the day, 920
'Tis thine to guard her as she points the way.

Agreed—Zerbino said, and speaking, wheel'd
His rapid courser to dispute the field:
Firm on his stirrups with collected might,
He stood; and, to direct his spear aright, 925
Against her buckler drove the pointed wood;
Which, like a mount of steel, the shock withstood;
While she, with better nerve, his helmet found,
And instant hurl'd him senseless to the ground.

Zerbino, thus unhors'd, such shame confess'd, 930
As ne'er till then his generous soul depress'd.
Full many a warrior had his spear before
Cast from their seats: but now he fears, no more
His arm shall clear his fame, while lost in thought,
New anguish in his pensive bosom wrought, 935
To think henceforth, by sacred promise plight,
Himself constrain'd to rest the beldame's knight.

High seated on her steed, the conquering maid
Turn'd with a smile—Accept my gift (she said);
The more I see the dame in beauty shine, 940
It joys me more to see such beauty thine.
Then, in my place, her champion's charge sustain,
Nor let thy faith, so lately pledg'd, be vain.
Whate'er she bids, it fits thee to obey,
Guide of her fate, and partner of her way. 945

She stay'd not for reply, but left the knight,
And soon the forest shut her from his sight.

Ver. 947 — *shut her from his sight.*] He returns to Marphisa,
Book xxv. ver. 679.

Then to the crone he spoke (for sure he deem'd
His conquering foe a warrior as she seem'd)
Give me to hear what knight has stain'd my fame? 950
The beldame answer'd, eager to proclaim
What known would grieve him more—On yonder
land

Thou fall'st (she cry'd) beneath a virgin's hand :
A virgin, who for valour well may wield
The warrior's falchion and the warrior's shield; 955
Who now from Eastern realms, with sword and lance,
Is come to prove the Paladins of France.

At this, Zerbino's soul indignant glow'd,
While o'er his visage flush'd the changing blood ;
Through all his frame the deep contagion spread, 960
And ev'n his armour seem'd to blush with red.
Remounting on his steed, he curs'd in vain
The nerves that could not late his seat maintain.
The hag in secret smil'd, and every art
Of malice try'd t' afflict his generous heart 965
With cruel taunts, and bade him call to mind
What chance had now to hers his will resign'd.

Zerbino heard abash'd, nor aught reply'd,
Constrain'd the worst, like weary steed, to' abide,
That feels the bit in mouth, and rowels at his side. }

In frequent sighs he gave his anguish vent : 971
What dire reverse (he cry'd) has Fortune sent !
While she, the first in virtue as in charms,
Untimely torn from these desiring arms,
Is dash'd on rocks, or given the precious food 975
Of ravenous fish and fowls that haunt the flood.
Lo ! her, that buried in her earthly bed,
Should long ere this the hungry worms have fed,

Thou now preserv'st beyond her loathsome date,
To add new torments to my wretched state. 980

Thus spoke Zerbino, hapless and forlorn :
Nor less in words and looks he seem'd to mourn
His odious mate, by luckless chance acquir'd,
Than loss of her whom most his soul desir'd.

If still your mind retains what once I told, 985
This hag was she who left the cavern'd hold,
Where Isabella, who Zerbino held

In love's soft bonds, some days a prisoner dwell'd :
Oft had she there rehears'd her story o'er,
How first she left her dear paternal shore ; 990

How, shipwreck'd on the sea and shelvy strand,
She sav'd her life on Rochelle's welcome land.

Oft would the love-lorn maid delight to tell
Of lost Zerbino ; oft with rapture dwell
On every grace : Soon as the beldame nigh, 995

Had mark'd his mien and face with heedful eye,
She deem'd in him she view'd the noble youth
By Isabella wept with matchless truth ;

Whose absence to her soul more sorrow gave
Than cruel bondage in the outlaws' cave. 1000

But when she now with fix'd attention heard
His words in bitterness of soul preferr'd,
She found 'twas he, who, by report misled,
His dearest Isabella, mourn'd as dead ;
And while the truth she knew, with impious spite, 1005
T' exclude all gleam of comfort from the knight,
What best might raise his hope she kept conceal'd,
And what would give him pain, alone reveal'd.

Hear thou (she cry'd), from whom I thus have borne
Such haughty carriage, such insulting scorn, 1010

Did'st thou but think what tidings I could tell
 Of her on whom thy fond affections dwell,
 How might'st thou speak me fair—but all in vain
 Would force or soothing now that secret gain,
 Which, had thy speech more gentle manners shown, 1015
 Thou might'st, perchance, discourteous youth, have
 known.

As the grim mastiff, who with fury threats
 Th' invading robber, soon his rage forgets,
 Whene'er, by scent of savoury meat allur'd,
 Or lull'd with spells by magic art procur'd: 1020
 Thus soon Zerbino, with a soften'd air,
 Besought the hag with tears and humble prayer,
 By Gods and men, no longer to conceal
 Whate'er of good or ill she could reveal.

Nought canst thou know, that known would yield
 delight, 1025

(Th' unfeeling beldame answer'd to the knight)
 She lives! whom now as dead thy sighs deplore,
 But lives to envy those who live no more.
 Full twenty, not by laws nor faith restrain'd,
 Thy Isabella long in bonds detain'd: 1030
 Then think, should fate restore her to thy arms,
 What hope remains t' enjoy her virgin charms?

Ah! hag accurs'd! (Zerbino made reply)
 How hast thou fram'd a foul detested lie!
 Though twenty might the captive fair detain, 1035
 Not one would dare her spotless honour stain.

Thus he—then question'd when and where she view'd
 His best lov'd; but she, in sullen mood,
 Was mute; determin'd to disclose no more,
 Nor add a word to what she told before. 1040

Zerbino mildly first his speech address'd,
Then held his threatening weapon to her breast. .
Alike in vain his prayer, his menace prov'd,
Nor prayer, nor threat, the stubborn beldame mov'd.
Yet what he heard, he ponder'd deep in thought, 1045
Till secret fears his jealous torment wrought.
He burn'd his Isabella's charms to view,
Through toils to follow, and to death pursue;
But durst not move without his partner's will,
Which late Marphisa bound him to fulfil. 1050
Thence, as she led, through solitary shade
And unfrequented paths Zerbino stray'd.
Whether o'er hill or vale their way they took,
Nor words they utter'd, nor exchang'd a look :
But when the sun, with slow declining ray, 1055
Had past the splendor of meridian day,
To break the silence, in the way there fell
A knight, whose name th' ensuing book shall tell.

END OF THE TWENTIETH BOOK.



THE
TWENTY-FIRST BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE ARGUMENT.

ZERBINO, to defend **Gabrina**, engages in single combat with **Hermionides**, from whom he hears the particulars of her wicked life, and is warned of the mischiefs that may befall him from her company.

THE
TWENTY-FIRST BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

NOT strongest cords in circling bandage roll'd,
So closely brace; not clasps of iron hold
The plank so firm, as plighted faith can bind
In never-loosening ties the noble mind.
The sages hence, of ancient time, have drest 5
Faith (heavenly Goddess !) in a spotless vest
Envelop'd fair, and white as falling snows,
That every casual soil and blemish shows.
True honour must in even tenor run,
Before a thousand pledg'd, or given to one: 10
Not less in woods or lonely caverns known,
Far from the concourse of the peopled town,
Than at the full tribunal, where aloud
Each act is witness'd to the listening crowd:

Ver. 5. *The sages hence, &c.* --] That faith (or sincere dealing)
was anciently painted in white garments, may be gathered from
this passage in Horace.

..... et albo rara fides colit
Velata panno.

Without or oaths, or forms judicial past, 15
A promise made but once should ever last.
This duty, still on virtuous minds imprest,
Was ever present to Zerbino's breast;
So sacred held, that from his purpos'd way
He turn'd aside, through devious paths to stray 20
With her, whom like disease or death he view'd;
Such sense of right his generous soul pursu'd.

Thus journey'd they, till from the western hills
The setting sun display'd his hindmost wheels,
When near advancing, with a fearless look, 25
A wandering warrior on their silence broke.
Well was he noted by the hateful dame;
Hermonides, of Holland, was his name,
Who bore athwart, depicted on his shield,
A band vermilion in a sable field. 30
By features chang'd the crone her fears express'd,
And to the prince her humble speech address'd.
She bade him now in mind his promise bear
To her, who plac'd her in his guardian care:
For he, the knight who met them face to face, 35
Was foe to her, and foe to all her race:
Her dear lov'd father perish'd by his guilt;
By him her only brother's blood was spilt;
And still he sought, with more than ruthless mind,
To glut his rage on all her wretched kind. 40
Woman! in me behold thy champion near!
(Zerbino cry'd) and banish every fear.

When now, with heedful eyes, th' approaching knight
Had mark'd that face, so odious to his sight,
Prepare with me in single fight to meet, 45
(Aloud he threatening cry'd with generous heat)

Or quit yon' female's side, and by my hand
Give her to perish as her crimes demand :
If thou defend'st her cause, thou must be slain,
For thus it falls to those who wrong maintain. 50
Zerbino then, with courteous speech reply'd,
Such thoughts could only with the base reside ;
Yet if he press'd the fight, he should not find
A flying foe ; but will'd him first in mind
To ponder, how a knight of gentle strain 55
In helpless woman's blood his hand could stain.

These words, and many more, in vain ensu'd ;
For deeds at length the contest must conclude :
Now for the tilt they wheel around the plain,
Then, turning furious, meet with loosen'd rein. 60
Not with such speed the whizzing rocket flies,
Dismiss with joy to burst in upper skies ;
As in the dreadful shock, each fiery horse
Bore either champion to the headlong course.
Low aim'd Hermonides his spear, and try'd 65
Through the left flank his pointed wood to guide :
The feeble wood in crashing splinters broke,
And scarce the knight of Scotland felt the stroke.
Far different came his lance ; with force impell'd,
The targe it pierc'd, and in the shoulder held 70
Its raging way, through plate and mail it flew,
And on the plain Hermonides o'erthrew.

Zerbino deem'd him slain ; with pitying haste
He lighted, and his glittering helm unlac'd.
At length, as from a trance, the wounded knight 75
Recovering, on Zerbino fix'd his sight
Awhile in silence, till in mournful strain
He said—It grieves me little to sustain

This shame from one, whom well his deeds bespeak
The flower of wandering knights that danger seek. 80
But much to suffer in her cause I grieve,
Whose murderous guile accustom'd to deceive,
Could such a knight in her defence engage:
For ill it suits an arm so brave to wage
A strife like this—and when thou hear'st the cause 85
That on her head my righteous fury draws,
Remembrance ever will remorse awake,
To think thou thus hast wrong'd me for her sake.
And if my spirits last (though much I fear
My strength may fail) a story shalt thou hear, 90
Which told, will prove how far her deeds disgrace
A woman's name, and all the human race.
My youthful brother, on his fame intent,
From Holland once, our native dwelling, went,
And to Heraclius soon a knight was made; 95
(Heraclius, who the Grecian empire sway'd)
A baron's friendship in the court he prov'd,
And he no less the courteous baron lov'd;
Who kept, near Servia's lands, a lonely seat,
A guarded fortress and a calm retreat. 100
Argeo was his name, whose choice had led
Yon loathsome woman to his nuptial bed,
On whom he doated with so fierce a flame,
As pass'd the bounds that rank like his became:

Ver. 95.—*Heraclius*.—] Heraclius was the sixteenth emperor of Greece, and succeeded Phocas. He was created emperor at Constantinople anno 611, and reigned near thirty years, and appears to be the same Heraclius in whose time the Saracen army, under Caled, laid siege to the city of Damascus; on which event Mr. Hughes founded his *Siege of Damascus*, the most excellent of modern tragedies.

B. XXI. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 139

But she, more changeful than the wither'd leaves, 105
 Which Autumn every year of sap bereaves,
 When the chill winds, collecting to a storm,
 The verdant honours of the grove deform,
 Now sudden chas'd from her inconstant breast
 The love her husband there had once possest; 110
 And every art essay'd of loose desire
 To make my brother burn in lawless fire.
 Not steadier meets th' Acroceraunean shore
 (Of impious fame) the ocean's surge roar:
 Not firmer, midst the northern blast, appears 115
 A pine, the produce of a hundred years,
 (Far as whose head above the Alps ascends,
 So deep its root beneath the surface tends)
 Than now my brother met the dame's request,
 A dame of every vice the fertile nest! 120
 Meantime, as it befalls a wandering knight
 Who danger seeks, on dangers oft to light;
 It chanc'd my brother, on adventures bound,
 Receiv'd in combat many a grievous wound.
 Argeo's fort was near, no need to wait 125
 For leave to enter at his friendly gate;
 He came, as wont, resolv'd with med'cine's power,
 And rest, his health and vigour to restore.

Ver. 113.—*th' Acroceraunean shore*—] Horace calls the rocks of Acroceraunia infamous, because mariners there often suffer shipwreck.

Infames scopulos Acroceraunia....

Lib. I. Od. iii.

These are high rocks or mountains in Epirus, the tops of which are frequently struck with lightning, from which circumstance they derive their name. They are near the promontory that hangs over the Ionian Sea,

Argeo, on some secret purpose bent,
As need requir'd him, from the castle went: 130
His consort then the welcome time embrac'd,
To tempt my brother with her suit unchaste:
But he, a loyal friend as virtuous youth,
Impatient to behold his spotless truth
So hard beset; whom evils thus enclose; 135
At length of many ills the lightest chose;
Of many ills this choice the youth pursues,
To fly Argeo, and his friendship lose;
And dwell an outcast, where the shameless dame
Might never hear again his luckless name, 140
Hard was the choice, but harder to fulfil,
Against his duty, her ungovern'd will;
Or to her lord accuse a faithless wife,
Her lord who priz'd her dearer than his life.
Still pale and feeble with his wounds he took 145
His arms and courser, and the place forsook;
In willing exile from his friend he went,
But envious Fortune cross'd his good intent.
Lo! to his home the husband came, and found
His wife in floods of seeming sorrow drown'd; 150
With hagg'd features and dishevell'd hair:
Surpris'd, he question'd whence her deep despair:
Again, and yet again, her speech he woo'd
To learn the cause, while she, in sullen mood,
Within her bosom schemes of malice bred, 155
To avenge her slighted flame on him who fled.
Nor deem it strange that she, refus'd so late,
Should sudden change her former love to hate.
At length—Ah! wherefore should I seek (she cry'd)
The guilt, incurr'd when thou wert gone, to hide? 160

Though from the world the horror I disguise,
It ever naked to reflection lies !

The soul that groans beneath a secret sin,
Feels its own weight of punishment within,
That far exceeds all outward pain of sense 165
Another might inflict for such offence:

If that, which force constrains, offence we name :

But be it as it may—attend my shame !

Then from its seat polluted let thy sword
To this unspotted soul release afford : 170

So shall these lids be clos'd in welcome sleep,
No longer after such disgrace to weep
With eyes cast downwards, fearing still to read
In every face abhorrence of the deed.

Know then—thy friend—thy bosom friend assail'd 175

My matron honour—and by force prevail'd:

Then dreading lest I should his crime recite,

The villain parted hence with speedy flight.

Thus she ; and with these impious words address
Against his friend, inflam'd her husband's breast: 180

Too easy of belief, Argeo flew

With arms and steed, his victim to pursue ;

The seeds of vengeance rankling in his mind,

Vers'd in the ways, my brother soon he join'd,

Who, faint with scarce heal'd wounds, in journey slow,

Pass'd pensive on, and little fear'd a foe. 186

Now, in a lonely shade, with eager rage,

The baron rush'd th' unequal fight to wage.

My hapless brother vain excuses fram'd ;

Incens'd Argeo loud the combat claim'd. 190

The one was strong, with deep resentment mov'd,

The other weak, and much his friend he lov'd.

Philander then (so call th' unhappy youth,
The guiltless victim of unspotted truth)
Who such a foe with strength unequal found, 195
Was vanquish'd in the fight, and captive bound.
Forbid it Heaven ! tho' now to justice led
For guilt so deep as thine (Argeo said)
I e'er should kill the man I held so dear,
The man I deem'd to me with faith sincere 200
Ally'd so late—my friendship thus betray'd,
Our cause before the impartial world be weigh'd.
As I in love excell'd, when once we lov'd,
So would I stand in hatred unrepov'd.
Let other punishment thy deeds attend, 205
Than death from him who call'd thee once his friend.

Thus he ; and on a courser bade be plac'd
A rustic bier of branches interlac'd,
Half dead thereon the wretched youth was laid,
And to the castle's neighbouring walls convey'd, 210
Where, in the lone retreat, he lay confin'd,
The penance for his forfeit life design'd.
Imprison'd there, he found each lenient grace,
Save only, in excursion from the place,
To roam abroad ; in all beside, he still 215
Found every menial ready at his will.

But that abandon'd dame, whose impious mind
Renew'd the purpose she at first design'd,
Each day Philander view'd, and as she chose,
With ready key bade every gate unclose : 220
My brother with insatiate will she press'd,
And bolder now preferr'd her foul request.
What more avails thy boasted truth (she cry'd),
Since my report has set that boast aside ?

B. XXI. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 143

In vain thy virtue due regard may claim, 225

When each insults thee with a traitor's name.

How had thy honour and thy peace been spar'd,

Wouldst thou have given my love its dear reward?

Behold the guerdon of thy mighty pains,

Of all thy rigour, lo ! what fruit remains ! 230

Thou dwell'st in durance, never hence to part,

Till pity soften thy obdurate heart :

But if thou yield'st—I some device will frame

To set thee free, and heal thy wounded fame.

Philander answer'd—Hope not to prevail, 285

Nor think Philander's faith shall ever fail ;

Though now it meets such unexpected lot :

Howe'er the world my merits has forgot,

One Power above my innocence can see,

And, at his will, my soul from trouble free. 240

If all suffice not—let Argeo take

This wretched being, his revenge to slake.

Perchance in Heaven hereafter may I find

That recompense, withheld me by mankind :

When he, who now detests my hated name, 245

As life shall cease to warm this mortal frame,

May to my mem'ry wrong'd at last be just,

And weep his dear companion laid in dust.

Thus oft the shameless woman strives to gain

Philander's love, as oft she strives in vain : 250

Blind with her lust, she feeds her flame within,

And hopes, at length, her lawless will to win ;

Each rack'd invention in her thought applies,

And ponders all her magazine of lies ;

A thousand schemes, now here, now there, revolves, 255

Nor yet on one her wavering mind resolves.

Six months elaps'd since last the impious dame,
 As was her custom, to his presence came,
 And hence he hop'd that time had cur'd her lustful
 flame.

}

But Fortune, friendly to the wicked, brought 260
 The wish'd occasion which she long had sought,
 And gave her, by unheard-of guilt t' attain
 The purpose which she oft had try'd in vain.

Between her husband and a baron reign'd
 A hatred, in their houses long maintain'd : 265

Morando was he call'd, surnam'd the Fair,
 Who oft, Argeo absent, would repair
 Within his castle gates, and every outrage dare.
 But, while the lord was there, aloof he stay'd,
 Nor durst for many a mile the seat invade. 270

}

Argeo, to entice him thither, feign'd
 A solemn vow to visit Sion's land.
 He seem'd to go, and all who view'd him, thought
 That, parting thence, Jerusalem he sought.
 Thus went the fame, while to his wife was known 275
 The truth entrusted to her faith alone.

At close of eve the castle he regain'd,
 And every night within the walls remain'd.
 With arms and ensigns chang'd, at dawn of day,
 Each morning to the woods he took his way. 280

Now here, now there, with heedful watch he stray'd
 Around his castle, lurking in the shade,
 To mark, if trusting to the well-form'd tale,
 Morando durst, as wont, his walls assail.
 All day abroad he roam'd, but when he view'd 285
 The light extinguish'd in the briny flood,

He came, where station'd his return to wait,
His wife receiv'd him at a secret gate.
All, save herself, believ'd that many a mile
Argeo travell'd; she with murderous guile 290
The curst occasion took, my brother found,
And with dire fraud her impious wishes crown'd;
While from her eyes, for ever brew'd at will,
She pour'd a shower of tears her breast to fill.

Where shall I fly? (she cry'd) what succour claim 295
To guard my own, to guard my husband's fame?
But were thy noble friend Argeo here,
Nor this, nor that, would give me cause for fear.
Thou know'st Morando well—Argeo hence,
Scarce Gods or men can yield me now defence 300
Against the traitor, who with many a bribe
And menace, would seduce my menial tribe
To win me to his will—who, since he heard
My lord no longer in these gates appear'd,
On distant travel bent, has dar'd presume, 305
Unask'd, and hateful in my sight to come;
But, were my consort now within my call,
Had kept aloof from this well-guarded wall.
The suit he once by distant message press'd,
He boldly now has face to face address'd; 310
So close address'd, I dread that future shame,
And dire misfortune will attend my name:
And but I late, with more attentive ear,
Gently appear'd his amorous tale to hear,
His passion would have seiz'd, by open force, 315
What now he hopes to win by milder course.
I promis'd soon to yield--yet ne'er design'd
To keep what, made through fear, can never bind.

For this, in thee alone I trust for aid;
Unhelp'd by thee my honour is betray'd, 320
With my Argeo's—which, if truth may lie
In friendship's words, you once esteem'd so high.
If thou refuse—I to the world attest,
Thy bosom wants that faith it once profess'd.
Nor was it virtue, but thy cruel scorn, 325
Urg'd thee to slight my tears, and see me-mourn :
Argeo's fame pretended was the shield
That, held before, thy ruthless soul conceal'd.
With thee Love's theft had lurk'd secure from blame,
But with Morando all must know thy shame. 330
There needs not this (Philander cries) to move
A spirit ever prompt the most to prove
For my Argeo's sake—thy wish explain—
The faith I once possess'd, I still retain.
Whate'er the woes which undeserv'd I feel, 335
No deed of his abates my constant zeal :
Peril and death for him I dare oppose,
Be Fate itself, and all the world, my foes.
Then impious she—Thy weapon must destroy
The wretch who seeks to poison all my joy. 340
Fear not that evil shall thyself betide,
Do thou but firmly act as I shall guide.
Morando will return, when rising night
With murky shade obscures the setting light.
While, at a signal fix'd, prepar'd I wait 345
Unseen, to give him entrance at the gate.
Thee will I safe in secret ambush place,
Without a ray the friendly gloom to chase ;
Till, urg'd by me, his arms aside to lay,
He to thy justice falls an easy prey. 350

With cruelty unheard, the ruthless wife
 Thus form'd the snare t' entrap her husband's life :
 If wife she may be call'd, or rather nam'd
 A fiend, with more than fiend-like rage inflam'd.

When now the fatal night her shadows spread, 355
 She to her room my wretched brother led ;
 There plac'd him with his arms and trusty sword,
 Till home return'd the castle's absent lord.

All to her impious hopes in course besel ;
 'Tis rare but evil deeds succeed too well. 360

Philander deem'd in him Argeo's foe,
 And at his own Argeo aim'd the blow :
 The cruel weapon cleft his head in twain,
 No helm was there the fury to sustain :
 Speechless he fell ; and bleeding as he lay, 365
 Without a struggle groan'd his life away.

Unheard of chance ! when thinking to bestow
 A friend's kind aid, he, with a fatal blow,
 Such greeting gave as fits the deadliest foe. }
 The husband thus dispatch'd ; his murdering sword 370
 My brother to Gabrina's hand restor'd.

Gabrina was her name, who every day
 Is born to curse, and lives but to betray !
 She who, till then, conceal'd the horrid truth,
 With lighted torch approach'd th' unhappy youth, 375
 And bade him view how well his arm had sped,
 And show'd where lay his friend Argeo dead.

She menac'd then, unless his pliant will
 The dictates of her hateful love fulfil,
 In every part to make his trespass known, 380
 Which all should tell, and he in vain disown.

So must he die, with guilt of murder stain'd,
A public victim to the hangman's hand.
She bade him ponder, tho' to die he dar'd,
If for a shameful death he stood prepar'd. 385

Philander, when his dire mistake he view'd,
Congeal'd with horror and amazement stood;
Remorse and rage to vengeance first impell'd
His raving thought, and had not reason quell'd
The rash design, suggesting, that expos'd 390

In hostile walls he stood with foes enclos'd;
Though now disarm'd, his hand the means had found
To rend her mangled corse with many a wound,
And with her bleeding members strew the ground. }

As when a ship, that in mid ocean sails, 395
Drives to and fro by two opposing gales :

Between two evils thus Philander prest,
Debates, at length he fixes on the least:
Beside the certain view of speedy death,
He fears with infamy to yield his breath; 400
If in the castle should his deed be try'd,
And little time is left him to decide.

Fate urges now the dreadful draught to take,
Though all her arts before could never shake
His constant faith: the dread of death with shame, 405
Compels him, while he loaths her impious flame,
To plight his vow, to join with hers his hand,
When both had safely left the Grecian land.

Thus the foul sorc'ress won his forc'd consent,
And with him closely from the castle went. 410
Again his home and friends Philander view'd,
But infamy in Greece his name pursu'd.

Still in his mind he bears, with thrilling pain,
His lov'd companion by his weapon slain;
Whence, for a murder'd friend, (Ah, dire to tell!) 415
He gain'd a Progne, or Medea fell;
And, but his honour plighted could controul,
With powerful ties, th' emotions of his soul,
Her death had follow'd: yet his hatred more
Pursu'd that life, his sword, compell'd, forbore. 420
Ne'er was he seen, from that curst hour, to wear
A cheerful smile: his looks were all despair.
Sighs burst unceasing from his mournful breast:
Like young Orestes by the furies prest,
I dread avengement for the fatal deed, 425
That made his mother and Egystus bleed.
Deep, and more deep, grief work'd its canker'd way,
Till on his bed of sickness sad Philander lay.

The foul adultrous, who his heart beheld
Still to her flame averse, indignant swell'd 430
To fierce resentment, till her thoughts, estrang'd
From all her love, again to hatred chang'd:
And soon, as once against the baron's life,
Against my brother's wrought this impious wife,
From this bad world to send, with arts accurst, 435
The second husband as she sent the first.

A leech she found, far better taught to kill
With poisonous, than with wholesome draughts to heal;
And him she drew, by hopes of vast reward,
With her infernal purpose to accord, 440
The strength of some envenom'd juice to prove,
And from her loathing sight her lord remove.

Join'd with myself, a mourning friendly band
Enclos'd his bed, when with the cup in hand

The leech approach'd, and said the drink he bore 445
Would soon my brother's wasted health restore.

But ere the patient could the mixture taste,
Gabrina, with inhuman craft, in haste
Advanc'd, perchance a witness to remove
Who knew th' effects of her detested love: 450

Perchance in av'rice to withhold his gains,
The price agreed to recompense his pains.
She seiz'd his hand, while to the sick he held
The fatal goblet that the drink conceal'd.
Be not displeas'd (she cry'd), if thus I fear 455
For one whose life I ever held so dear.

Give me, by proof, to know thou hast not brought
Some potion here with fatal venom fraught:
Think not my lord the proffer'd cup shall take,
Till first thy lips the med'cine's trial make. 460

Reflect, Sir knight! how stood depriv'd of speech,
In his own treason caught, the wretched leech:
The time, that press'd, allow'd not to revolve,
And fix his mind on what he should resolve:
Fearful t' expose his guilt, he deem'd it best, 465
Without delay, to give th' exacted test.

The sick man then, with unsuspecting thought,
Quaff'd all the remnant of the deadly draught.
As when a hawk, whose crooked talons feel
The partridge that he dooms his future meal, 470

Beholds the dog, late partner of his toil,
Assail, and from his grasp convey the spoil:
So this vile leech, by thirst of gain betray'd,
Remains deserted where he look'd for aid.
O unexampled guilt! henceforth on all, 475
Who thirst, like him, for gold, may equal justice fall!

The deed complete, the wretch prepar'd to take
His journey home, some antidote to make,
Ere yet too far the poison through his blood
Had spread ; but fell Gabrina this withstood. 480
She vow'd he must not yet his patient leave,
Till all the virtue of his drugs perceive.
In vain with prayers, in vain with bribes he try'd
To be dismiss'd ; the traitress hag deny'd.
All desperate now, he sees before his eye 485
Immediate death, nor from that death can fly.
Then to th' assistants he the truth expos'd,
Nor could the hag disprove the truth disclos'd.
Thus on himself that good physician brought
Such evil, as he oft for others wrought. 490
And now his spirit follow'd, to pursue
My brother's spirit that before him flew ;
While we, who late with freezing horror heard
The truth that by the leech's tale appear'd,
Seiz'd on that hag, with fiercer rage indu'd, 495
Than every howling savage of the wood !
And in a dungeon shut, condemn'd by fire
For all her crimes in torture to expire.

Thus said Hermonides, and more had spoke,
To tell how from her prison walls she broke, 500
But, fainting with the anguish of his wound,
He backward fell, half senseless, on the ground ;
While two attending squires, with ready care,
Of branches lopt a rustic bier prepare :

Ver. 499. *Thus said Hermonides,—*] This story of Gabrina and the physician, is to be found in the Golden Ass of Apuleius.

Here, as he will'd, Hermonides they laid, 505
 And thus, disabled, from the field convey'd.
 Zerbino seeks t' excuse his luckless deed,
 Much griev'd by him to see the champion bleed;
 Yet, as requir'd from those who knighthood claim,
 He but defended her with whom he came: 510
 Else had his plighted faith been empty wind;
 For when the crone was to his charge consign'd,
 He vow'd his prowess should with arms oppose,
 In her behalf whoe'er appear'd her foes.
 In all beside, he stood by deed or word 515
 Prepar'd to aid, with counsel or with sword,
 A knight whose chance his generous heart deplor'd. }

The knight return'd—He wish'd him to beware,
 And rid his hands of fell Gabrina's care,
 Ere her black arts had fram'd some guileful train 520
 To make his grief and late repentance vain.
 Gabrina silent stood, with downcast eye;
 For truth confirm'd admits not a reply.

Departing thence, Zerbino took his way
 Where with the hag his destin'd journey lay, 525
 And curs'd her oft, to think his arms had brought
 Such ill on him, whom for her sake he fought.
 And since her impious life was brought to view,
 By one who well her hidden actions knew,
 His hatred kindled to so fierce a height, 530
 He turn'd with horror from her loathsome sight.
 She, who beholds Zerbino's secret mind,
 Nor will in enmity remain behind,

Ver. 524. *Departing thence,—*] The poet speaks no more of Hermonides.

Bates not an inch of malice, but repays
His hatred with her own a hundred ways : 535
Black poison rankles in her impious breast,
In every feature rancour stands confest.
Thus in firm concord, as the Muse has told,
Through the thick wood their friendly course they hold :
When from the west the setting rays appear, 540
The noise of clashing arms and blows they hear ;
The sign of battle nigh—With eager speed
To learn the cause Zerblino spurs his steed,
Nor seems more slow Gabrina to pursue—
What chanc'd th' ensuing book reveals to view. 545

END OF THE TWENTY-FIRST BOOK.



THE
TWENTY-SECOND BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE ARGUMENT.

ASTOLPHO arrives at the enchanted palace of Atlantes, where, by the help of his horn, he dissolves the enchantment, and sets all the prisoners at liberty. Rogero and Bradamant meet and know each other: They depart together, and are addressed by a damsel, who engages them to undertake the deliverance of a youth condemned to be put to death. In their way they are stopped at the castle of Pinabello, where Rogero jousts with four knights, who were sworn to defend a law which Pinabello had made, to spoil all strangers who travelled that way. Rogero casts his enchanted shield into a well.

THE
TWENTY-SECOND BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

YE courteous damsels! to your lovers dear;
Content in love one favour'd youth to hear!
Though rarely, midst the female race, we find
A chosen few that boast a constant mind;
Be not displeas'd, if following thus my tale, 5
Against Gabrina late I dar'd to rail
In terms so harsh, and still, some future page,
Prepare to scourge her more than impious rage:

Ver. 1. *Ye courteous damsels!—*] Spenser seems to have imitated this, and the beginning of the xxviiiith Book in the following passage, where he is about to treat of the wanton Hellenore:

Redoubted knights and honourable dames,
To whom I level all my labours end,
Right sore I fear, lest with unworthy blames
This odious argument my rhymes should shend,
Or aught your goodly patience offend;
Whiles of a lovely lady I do write,
Which with her loose incontinence doth blend
The shining glory of your sovereign light,
And knighthood foul defaced by a faithless knight.

Book iii. C. ix. St. 1.

Such as she was, even such must I reveal,
 Nor (so my patron bids) the truth conceal: 10
 Yet think not hence their honours shall be lost,
 Whose purer hearts untainted faith can boast.
 Who to the Jews' his Lord betray'd for gain,
 Nor leaves on Peter, nor on John a stain :
 Not Hypermnestra less in fame survives, 15
 Though her dire sisters sought their husbands' lives.
 For one on whose demerits here I dwell,
 (As wills the order of the tale I tell)
 A hundred shall adorn my better lays,
 And, like the radiant sun, diffuse their praise. 20
 Attend the vary'd story, which to hear
 I trust that many lend a gracious ear.

We left the Scottish knight, with loud alarms
 Of sudden tumult rous'd, and clashing arms.
 Between two hills a narrow vale he found, 25
 Whence late before he heard the falchion's sound ;
 But now the noise was hush'd :—There pale he view'd
 A knight just slain, and weltering in his blood.
 His name I shall reveal—though now to seek
 The eastern clime, no more of France I speak : 30
 The Paladin Astolpho let us find,
 Who to the west his speedy course design'd :

Ver. 15. *Not Hypermnestra—*] Hypermnestra was one of the fifty daughters of Danaüs, who being constrained to marry their kinsmen, the fifty sons of Ægystus, all, but Hypermnestra, at the command of their father, slew their husbands on the wedding night; the oracle having foretold to Danaüs, that he should die by the hand of a son-in-law: but Hypermnestra saved her husband Linus, and contrived means for his escape.

See *Ovid's Epistles*,
 Hypermnestra to Linus.

Ver. 29. *His name I shall reveal—*] See Book xxiii. ver. 281.

We saw him last, amid'st th' inhuman band
Of warlike females, clear the hostile land ;
While his pale friends their ready canvas spread, 35
And from the shore disgrac'd and trembling fled.
Now hear his tale—the knight those realms forsook,
And to Armenia next his journey took.
Some days elaps'd, he hasten'd to survey
Natolia, then to Brusia held his way ; 40
Till coursing on beyond the midland tide,
He enter'd Thrace ; by Danube's flowery side
His rapid progress through Hungaria held :
Then, as if wings his courser's speed impell'd,
He pass'd Moravia and Bohemia's land, 45
And where the Rhine o'erflows Franconia's strand.
To Aquisgrana, and to Arden's wood,
He came ; to Brabant next his way pursu'd ;
At Flanders then embark'd, where friendly gales
So fill'd the freighted vessel's flying sails, 50
Ere long Astolpho reach'd fair England's shore,
And gain'd the welcome port at noontide hour.

He press'd his steed, and, urging all his haste,
To London came ere eve her shadows cast ;
There heard that many a month its course had run, 55
Since aged Otho lay in Paris' town :
That many a baron, by example led,
Had left the land his glorious steps to tread.
He strait resolv'd to Gallia to resort,
And turn'd again to Thames's crowded port. 60
With hoisted sail he issues on the tide,
And bids the crew their prow to Calais guide.
A gale, that gently seems at first to sweep
The vessel's deck, and scarcely curl the deep,

At length, by slow degrees, increasing blows, 65
And now, beyond the pilot's wishes, grows
So near a storm, as claim'd his skilful care,
The conflict of the dashing waves to bear.
High o'er the furrow'd sea, before the wind,
The bark is driven, and quits her course design'd: 70
Now on the right, and now the left she rides;
As here, or there, malicious Fortune guides.
Near Roan, at length, she anchor'd on the strand:
Astolpho, when he touch'd the welcome land,
On Rabicano's back the saddle plac'd; 75
His limbs the mail, his side the falchion grac'd;
He grasp'd his fearful horn, a surer aid
Than marshall'd bands in glittering arms array'd.

Now passing through a wood, he reach'd a hill
Whose foot was moisten'd by a crystal rill; 80
What time the flocks to crop the mead forbear,
And to the fold or mountain cave repair.

With burning heat, with parching thirst distress'd,
The helm unlac'd, whose weight his brows oppress'd.
Amid the brakes his fiery steed he ty'd; 85
Then to the stream, for cooling draughts, apply'd
His eager lips; but e'er his lips essay'd
The moistening liquid, from the neighbouring shade
A rustic starting swift, his courser took,
Leapt on his back, and turn'd him from the brook. 90

Astolpho, rousing at the noise, perceives
Th' insulting outrage, and the fountain leaves.
Resentment now the place of thirst supplies,
And swift he follows as the caitiff flies.
The caitiff led him on in doubtful chace, 95
Now check'd, and now impell'd his courser's pace.

| | | |
|----------|------------------|-----|
| B. XXII. | ORLANDO FURIOSO. | 161 |
|----------|------------------|-----|

At length (pursuing one, and one pursu'd)
 They left the forest, and the palace view'd,
 Where magic spells, without a prison, hold
 In lasting durance many a baron bold. 100

The rustic to the palace drives the steed,
 Light as the wind, and like the wind in speed.
 Astolpho, in his plated arms confin'd,
 With heavy shield encumber'd, lags behind :
 'Till now arriving, he beholds no more 105
 The hind and courser he pursu'd before.
 He plies his feet within the palace wall,
 Explores in vain each gallery, room, and hall :
 He knows not where the traitor has conceal'd
 His Rabicano, that in course excell'd 110
 The fleetest beast : at length his better thought
 Suggests, that all by magic art was wrought.
 He calls to mind the book that to his hand
 Sage Logistilla gave in India's land,
 Which ever near he kept with heedful care, 115
 A certain guide in every magic snare.
 There full describ'd was all the costly pile,
 Each strange enchantment, and each secret guile ;
 What means the foul magician's arts would quell,
 And free his prisoners from the potent spell. 120
 Beneath the threshold plac'd, a demon rais'd
 The various wonders that the sense amaz'd.
 The stone remov'd, where close the spirit lay,
 The palace walls would melt in smoke away.
 Thus said the book ; and eager to pursue 125
 The great adventure open'd to his view,

Ver. 100.—*lasting durance*.—] The story of this palace is continued from Book xii. where it is fully described, ver. 54. and seq.

The Paladin advanc'd, with fearless pace,
 To lift the ponderous marble from its base.
 Soon as Atlantes saw his hands prepar'd
 To set at large the castle's fatal guard, 130
 Fearful of what might chance, his restless mind
 Against the champion other wiles design'd :
 By magic art, he gives the gentle knight
 A different shape to each beholder's sight :
 By this, a hind ; by this, a giant seen : 135
 By that, a warrior of ill-favour'd mien ;
 While each in him th' illusive image view'd,
 For which he late Atlantes' steps pursu'd.

Impatient to retrieve their honour stain'd,
 All turn'd on him—a fierce determin'd band ! 140
 Rogero, Bradamant, Gradasso there,
 Iroldo, Brandimart in arms, prepare,
 With brave Prasildo, by the spell misled,
 To wreak their vengeance on Astolpho's head :
 But, mindful of his horn, he soon depress'd, 145
 With chilling terror, every haughty crest.
 In happy time the fear-dispensing breath
 Preserv'd the Paladin from instant death.
 Soon as his lips have touch'd the narrow vent,
 And wide around the deafening clangor sent, 150
 Like trembling doves, when through the breaking skies
 Resounds the gun, each knight affrighted flies :
 Not less th' enchanter old * the noise receives ;
 Not less amaz'd the wondrous dome he leaves,

* Atlantes.

To distance flies, heart-struck with deep dismay, 155
Till, dying off, the dreadful sounds decay !

The keeper * and his prisoners quit the walls ;
And numerous steeds with these forsake their stalls,
That, not by halters, nor by reins confin'd,
Through various paths their absent masters join'd. 160
While thus the knight his fearful music play'd,
Nor cat, nor mouse, within the dwelling stay'd ;
Ev'n Rabican had fled, but with his hand,
Astolpho, as he pass'd, the steed detain'd.

And now th' intrepid duke (the sorc'rer gone) 165
From off the threshold heav'd a weighty stone.

An image there he found, with many a spell
Of hidden force, that boots not here to tell.
Eager to quell the charm, with frequent stroke,
Whate'er he found, the knight in pieces broke ; 170
For so the book (his sure instructor) show'd ;
And all the palace vanish'd in a cloud !

Held by a chain of beaten gold, he view'd
Where good Rogero's winged courser stood ;
That winged courser which the wizard * Moor 175
Had sent to bear him to Alcina's shore.

For which had Logistilla deign'd to frame
The reins and bit, with which to France he came ;

* Atlantes.

Ver. 161. — *his fearful music play'd,*

Nor cat, nor mouse, &c. —] Such passages as these, that are certainly ludicrous and familiar, and very different from the genius of Epic writing, will not admit of any elevation of language, and yet ought surely to be preserved, if a translation means to exhibit to an English reader the features of his author.

And, borne from distant Ind, to England's strand,
Had hover'd o'er vast tracts of seas and land. 180

I know not if your mem'ry still retains,
How to the tree that day the griffin's reins
Rogeró left, when, bright in naked charms,
Albracca's princess * vanish'd from his arms,
And left him whelm'd in shame—with rapid speed 185
Back to his lord return'd the faithful steed,
Wonderous to see ! and stabled there remain'd,
Till the strong spell no more its power retain'd.

No chance than this could yield sincerer joy
To good Astolpho, who resolv'd t' employ 190
Th' occasion given new regions to explore,
Oceans and realms by him unseen before.
He prov'd how well the matchless steed could bear
The flying rider, when through fields of air
He late escap'd from India's fatal lands, 195
Freed by Melissa from her cruel hands,
Who, with infernal arts, his limbs estrang'd
From human form, and to a myrtle chang'd.

He saw, how Logistilla, to restrain
The docile beast, had fix'd the curbing rein ; 200
And mark'd the counsel which the prudent dame
Rogeró gave, his furious course to tame.
The ready saddle on the steed he brac'd,
Then in his mouth the bit and reins he plac'd,
As suited best ; for choice of bridles there 205
He found, which many a steed was wont to wear.
The thought of Rabicano yet detain'd
The knight, and yet awhile his flight restrain'd.

Well had he cause to hold the courser dear;
 None better in the list with rested spear 210
 Could run at tilt: with him at Gathia's land
 He travell'd safe from Egypt's burning sand.

Debating long, Astolpho now decreed,
 With some well-chosen friend t' entrust the steed,
 Rather than leave him an invalu'd prey, 215
 For him whom Fortune led to pass the way.
 His purpose fix'd, with looks intent he stood,
 To mark if hind or huntsman cross'd the wood,
 Who to some neighbouring town might lead behind
 Good Rabicano, to his charge consign'd. 220
 All day he stay'd, he stay'd till roseate morn
 Had made, in eastern skies, her wish'd return,
 When, scarce the shadows chas'd by misty light,
 He saw, or seem'd to see, a wand'ring knight.
 But, ere I speak the rest, I first shall tell, 225
 What to the noble Bradamant befel,
 With brave Rogero, when (dispell'd their fear)
 No more the clangor of the horn they hear.

The lovers saw, what, ne'er till then reveal'd,
 Atlantes long from either had conceal'd: 230
 Such mists of darkness o'er their sight he drew,
 That neither, till that hour, the other knew.
 On Bradamant Rogero fix'd his eyes;
 She on Rogero gaz'd with like surprise.
 Now round her waist his eager arms he throws, 235
 Her blushes kindling like the maiden rose,

While from her lips each balmy sweet he proves,
 The blossoms of his first auspicious loves!
 A thousand times th' enraptur'd lovers meet
 In fond embrace; a thousand times repeat 240
 Their mutual vows, while scarce their breasts contain
 The joy that throbs in every glowing vein.
 Yet much they sorrow'd, that by magic slight,
 They liv'd so long estrang'd from either's sight,
 And lost so many days of dear delight. 215 }

While Bradamant such favour'd grace bestows,
 As the chaste maid to chaste affection owes,
 She tells Rogero, would he hope to prove
 The last dear blessings of connubial love,
 He from her father Amon (ere the bands 250
 Of sacred Hymen join their plighted hands)
 Must gain consent, and in the hallow'd wave
 With Christian rites his Pagan errors lave.

Rogero, for his dearest mistress' sake,
 Not only yields a Christian's name to take 255
 Which once his father and his uncle bore,
 Which all his ancestors profess'd before:
 But vows, for her, in every chance to give
 The remnant years Heaven doom'd him yet to live.
 Behold me sworn (he cries) at thy desire, 260
 To plunge in water, or to plunge in fire.

Then first to be baptiz'd, and next to wed,
 Rogero follow'd as the virgin led:
 Tow'rds Vallombrosa led the martial dame,
 That to an ancient abbey gave the name, 265

Ver. 264. *Tow'rds Vallombrosa*—] The religious order of Vallombrosa had its beginning from one Giovanni Gualberto, a Florentine, who,

Wealthy and fair, in hallow'd rituals blest,
And courteous to receive the stranger guest.

Now issuing from the wood a gentle maid
They chanc'd to meet, whose looks her grief betray'd.
Rogero prompt to feel for each distress, 270
But chief those sorrows which the fair oppress;
With pity touch'd the tender mourner view'd,
(Whose trickling tears her bloomy cheeks bedew'd)
And, greeting mild, besought the cause to know,
That o'er her features drew the clouds of woe. 275
He spoke; when, lifting up her humid eyes,
To speak her grief, she sweetly thus replies.

Ah! noble knight! thou soon shalt learn (she said)
Why o'er my face these drops of anguish spread:
I mourn a youth, who, ere the day is past, 280
Must in a neighbouring castle breathe his last.
He lov'd the fairest of the female train,
Whose sire, Marsilius, holds the rule of Spain.
Cloth'd in a female garb, with soft disguise,
His well-feign'd voice and downcast bashful eyes 285
Bely'd his sex—their loves awhile conceal'd,
At length ill chance to strangers' ears reveal'd:
Each tells his fellow, till at length they bring
(Tale following tale) the tidings to the king.
Last night a guard from stern Marsilius came, 290
To seize in bed the lover and the dame:
Thence were they hurried by the king's command,
And in the castle walls apart detain'd:

forsaking the world, led a solitary life in a part of the Appenines called Vall' ombrosa (shady vale), and built a church there.

Fernari.

And, ah ! I fear ere this day's sad decline,
The youth in torment must his life resign. 295

And now, to shun the dreadful sight I fly :
Alive they sentence him by fire to die.
Can e'er my soul again such sorrows know,
That every future bliss will change to woe,
Oft as I call to mind the cruel flame 300
That prey'd relentless on his beauteous frame ?

While Bradamant attends the mournful tale,
She feels the sympathy of grief assail
Her tender breast; nor less she seem'd to feel,
Than if she trembled for a brother's weal. 305
Then, turning to Rogero, thus she cry'd :
For this unhappy let our force be try'd.
The damsel next she sooth'd—Compose thy grief,
Trust in our arms to bring unhop'd relief.
Lead to yon' wall—and should he yet survive, 310
No earthly power shall him of life deprive.

No less Rogero, than the warlike maid,
With ardour burns to give the wretched aid.
Then to the dame, from whose grief-swelling eyes
A torrent streams—Why this delay ? (he cries) 315
Not tears avail in this disastrous state,
Conduct us instant to the scene of fate ;
And here I vow to free him from his foes,
Though swords and spears, by thousands rang'd, oppose :
But hence—nor thus in fruitless converse stay, 320
Till yonder flames shall mock our long delay.

Thus he : The presence of the warlike pair,
Whose mien and words their dauntless souls declare,
Fair hope rekindles in the virgin's breast,
So late with sorrow and with fear opprest ; 325

Yet, pondering now she stood which path to tread,
Of two that tow'rd the destin'd castle led.

Should we (she cry'd) the readiest track pursue,
That open lies extended to the view,

I trust in time our succour might we give, 330

Ere yet the pile the deadly flame receive;

But since compell'd to take the winding way

Heavy and rough, I fear the closing day

To end our travel scarcely will suffice;

And, ere we reach the place, the victim dies. 335

But wherefore must we shun (Rogero cry'd)
The nearest path?—And thus the maid reply'd.

Athwart our way a stately castle stands,

Which Pinabello, Pontier's earl, commands;

Who, scarce three days elaps'd, has fram'd a law 340

That knights and damsels holds in cruel awe:

He, worst of men, with every vice is stor'd,

Son of Anselmo, Altariva's lord;

From whose ill-omen'd gate no knight nor dame

Departs unstay'd, and 'scapes untouch'd with shame.

Each thence must fare on foot: the warrior leaves 346

His shining arms; the dame her vesture gives.

No braver knights, through all the realms of France,

Now hold, or many a year have held, the lance,

Than four, that rank'd in Pinabello's train, 350

Have sworn his lawless custom to maintain.

Hear whence it rose—and mark the law unjust

On noble minds t' impose such impious trust!

In marriage band is Pinabello join'd

To one, the scandal of the female kind, 355

Whom late, as with her lord she chanc'd to ride,

A champion met that brought to shame her pride.

Behind the champion, on his steed, was borne
An aged crone, whom with insulting scorn
Th' injurious earl address'd : the stranger-knight 360
With Pinabello wag'd th' unequal fight.
Him, strong in pride, but weak in arms, he struck
Headlong to earth ; then from her palfrey took
The haughty fair one, left on foot, and dress'd
The ancient beldame in her youthful vest. 365
The dame dismounted (whom with rancorous mind
In every evil Pinabello join'd)
Declar'd no night nor day could rest afford,
No future hour behold her peace restor'd,
Unless a thousand dames and warriors foil'd, 370
She view'd unhors'd, of vest and arms despoil'd.

It chauc'd that day to Pinabello came
Four noble knights, the first in martial fame ;
These knights, with whom but few in arms could vie,
Return'd from realms beneath a distant sky : 375
Young Sansonetto ; Guido, Savage nam'd ;
Gryphon and Aquilant, the brethren fam'd.
These Pinabello at his gate receives
With semblance fair, and courteous welcome gives.
At night, when sleep has lull'd each sense to peace, 380
He binds the four, nor will their bonds release,
Till all consenting, as his laws prescribe,
A year and day to dwell amidst his tribe,
Shall swear from knights their steeds and arms to wrest,
And from the damsels take their steeds and vest. 385

Ver. 360.—*the stranger-knight*—] See Book xx. ver. 807.

Ver. 376. *Young Sansonetto*—] See Book xx. ver. 769.

To this compell'd, with heavy hearts they swore;
And not a champion, to this fatal hour,
Has yet been found their vigour to sustain,
Who press'd not, at his length, the fearful plain.
Full many a champion there his fall receives, 390
And, stript of arms, on foot the castle leaves.
'Tis fix'd, that he who first with single force,
Shall pass the bridge, alone must run the course:
But should such lance against the stranger fail,
The rest united must his strength assail. 395
Reflect, if each can boast such nerve in fight,
What three must prove, when three their spears unite.
Ill suits it us, whose haste forbids our stay,
In such a strife to hazard new delay.
For grant, that here your arms attain success, 400
As sure your warlike looks proclaim no less,
Yet much I fear, ere evening shades arise,
The youth, for whom I weep, unaided dies.

Rogero then—'Tis ours with ready zeal,
What honour bids, undaunted to fulfil; 405
The rest let Heaven direct, or Fortune guide,
What pow'rs soe'er in these events preside.
To thee the sequel of the jousts may show
How far our aid protection can bestow
On him, who, (as thou say'st) in youthful prime, 410
Is doom'd to death for such a venial crime.

Thus he. No more reply'd the gentle maid,
But through the nearest way the pair convey'd:
Not past three miles their journey they pursu'd,
When now the castle's bridge and gates they view'd, 415
Where arms and vests are left, where valu'd life
Is put to hazard in the dangerous strife.

The ready warder, on the ramparts plac'd,
 Twice rung the warning—when, behold ! in haste,
 On a low steed an ancient sire appear'd, 420
 And, as he came, his voice before was heard.

Hold, strangers, hold ! (he thus began to say)
 Here stop, and here the fine exacted pay !
 If yet you know not—let me now reveal
 Our law—and then he sought their law to tell, 425
 And next t' enforce, with accents sage and grave,
 That counsel, which to every knight he gave.
 Yon lady of her vest, my sons, bereave ;
 And you (he cry'd) your arms and coursers leave :
 Nor think, by dreadful perils here enclos'd, 430
 With four such warriors safe to stand oppos'd.
 Arms, vests, and coursers we with ease obtain,
 But life, once lost, what prowess can regain ?

Rogero cut him short—Forbear to show,
 In fruitless prelude, what prepar'd we know. 435
 No more—I come to prove, if what my will
 Aspires to act, my actions can fulfil.

Ver. 428. *Yon lady of her vest, my sons, bereave :*

And you (he cry'd) your arms and coursers leave.]

These kind of laws occur perpetually in the old romances, and several such are to be found in Spenser, particularly one, whereby knights and ladies pay toll of their beards and hair.

Ver. 432. *Arms, vests, and coursers, &c.—]* Not unlike these lines in the speech of Achilles to the ambassadors in the IXth Iliad.

Lost herds and treasures we by arms regain,
 And steeds unrivall'd on the dusty plain,
 But from our lips the vital spirit fled,
 Returns no more to wake the silent dead.

Pope, ver. 528.

Arms, steed, and vest, I ne'er to others yield
For empty threatenings in an untry'd field;
And well I trust, for sounding words alone, 440
My partner never will resign his own.

But give me to behold them face to face,
Whose strength must purchase, to my foul disgrace,
My arms and steed—o'er yonder hill we haste,
Nor longer here the precious hours can waste. 445

To whom the sire—Lo! issuing to the plain
One warrior comes—nor were his words in vain.
High on the bridge appear'd the noble knight,
In crimson surcoat deck'd with flowers of white.
Now Bradamant Rogero su'd to trust 450

With her the first fair honours of the joust,
From his high seat to hurl the knight, who wore
The mantled red, with flowers embroider'd o'er.
In vain she su'd, Rogero this deny'd:

Constrain'd to yield, she silent stood beside 455
To view the course, while on himself her knight
Took all the hazards of the dubious fight.

Rogero then enquir'd the warrior's name,
Who foremost from the castle's portal came.
'Tis Sansonetto (thus the sire reply'd) 460

I know th' embroider'd scarf with crimson dy'd.

Now Pinabello issu'd from the gate,
And round their lord his thronging menials wait,
All well prepar'd of arms and steeds to spoil
The hapless knights that fell within the toil. 465

Swift to the course each hardy champion press'd,
And firmly held his ponderous spear in rest,
Huge, knotty, long, in native forests bred,
The tough ash ending in a steely head,

Of these full ten had Sansonetto brought, 470
From neighbouring woods—of these in lances wrought
He fix'd on two; in brave Rogero's hand
The one he plac'd, and one himself retain'd.

Now here, now there, impatient of delay,
Each silent wheels his steed a different way: 475
Then turning swift, with levell'd spears, they meet,
The field wide-shaking to their coursers' feet,
Against their shields unerring aim they took:
Rogero's shield receiv'd, unhurt, the stroke:
Atlantes' buckler, whose enchanted light 480
With powerful splendor clos'd the gazer's sight,
Which still, unless by dangers great assail'd,
The knight beneath a silken covering veil'd.
Not so the adverse shield, whose mortal mold
Could not against the furious tourney hold. 485

As with a thunder-bolt the spear impell'd,
Reach'd the stunn'd arm that scarce the buckler held,
And Sansonetto, with a grievous wound
Forc'd from his seat, fell prostrate on the ground.
The first was he, of all the social train 490
Compell'd this ruffian usage to maintain,
That yet had fail'd a stranger to despoil,
Or from his seat dismounted, prest the soil:
Who laughs to-day, some future day may mourn,
And find to frowns the smiles of Fortune turn. 495

Again the warder rings th' alarm, and calls
The remnant three to quit the castle-walls.
Meantime it chanc'd, that Pinabello came
To noble Bradamant, and sought the name
Of him whose valour thus in arms excell'd, 500
Who thus the champion of his castle quell'd.

Eternal Heaven to give his crimes the meed
They well deserv'd, conducts him on the steed
Which, scarce eight months elaps'd, the wretch before
From Bradamant, by murderous treason, bore : 505
When, if your mem'ry still the tale recall,
In Merlin's tomb he let the virgin fall ;
What time the shatter'd pole receiv'd her weight,
And Heaven reserv'd her for a happier fate.

The generous heroine with a nearer view 510
Her courser saw, and soon the traitor knew ;
His well-known voice recall'd, his every look
Intent she mark'd, and to herself she spoke.
Lo ! this is he, who once my death design'd,
Now hither brought his due reward to find. 515

At once she threatens—to the sword applies
Her eager hand, and on the caitiff flies.
Between his castle and the recreant knight
She cuts off all retreat, nor can his flight
Avail to reach the gate ; as to his den 520
The fox retires beset by dogs and men.

Defenceless, pale, before the martial maid,
He seeks, with coward cries, the woodland shade :
With trembling heart he spurs his rapid steed,
And hopes alone for safety from his speed. 525
The Dordon dame pursues, with all the zeal
Of just revenge, and whirls her fatal steel,
Now at his side or bosom aims the wound :
The tumult echoes, and the woods resound.

But at the castle Pinabello's crew, 530
Nor heard his clamours, nor his danger knew :
There every eye was fix'd, there every sense
Rogero's conflict held in deep suspense.

And now the three remaining champions came
 From forth the fort; with these the vengeful dame 535
 Who fram'd the base device, while every knight
 Blush'd with a single foe to wage the fight;
 And rather wish'd to die, in fame unstain'd,
 Than meet a conquest so ignobly gain'd.
 But she, who first th' unequal joust design'd, 540
 T' enforce th' observance, bade them call to mind
 How each had sworn, by every solemn tie,
 For her revenge their strength combin'd to try.
 But if my single weapon can suffice,
 T' unhorse yon' warrior (Savage Guido cries) 545
 Thus shall I joust!—be mine the single strife,
 And if I fail—exact my forfeit life.

Gryphon and Aquilant alike demand
 To meet the stranger singly, hand to hand.
 To these th' imperious dame—Why thus delay 550
 In vain debate the bus'ness of the day?
 I brought you here yon champion's arms to take,
 Not other compacts, other laws to make.
 Why urge not pleas like this, ere yet ye swore
 T' observe my will, when first within my power; 555
 Not when th' occasion calls you to maintain
 Your promise given, nor make that promise vain?

Thus they—Behold (Rogero eager cries)
 Ye knights and dame!—if still you seek the prize
 Of armour, steed, or vest, why this delay 560
 To seize with valour's arms the offer'd prey?

The matron there impels each tardy knight,
 Here storms Rogero, and demands the fight.
 Till forc'd at length, though fir'd with generous rage,
 All rush at once the stranger to engage. 565

First rode the brother-chiefs, whose lineal name
From the high Marquis of Burgundia came ;
Then mounted on a steed of heavier pace,
Behind them Guido Savage held his place.
Rogero, with the spear to combat drew, 570
The spear that Sansonetto late o'erthrew :
His valiant arm the fated buckler bore,
Which in Pyrené's hills Atlantes wore ;
Th' enchanted buckler, whose resistless light
At greatest need preserv'd the noble knight : 575
Yet only thrice the wondrous aid he try'd :
And only thrice the shield its aid supply'd :
Twice, when the joys of shameful life he fled
For seats, where virtue every blessing shed ;
The last, when in the billowy main he left 580
The raging orc, of precious food bereft.
Save these alone, in every chance beside,
A veil was wont the dazzling orb to hide ;
At ease remov'd, whene'er the dangerous hour
Requir'd the help of more than mortal power. 585
Well-fenc'd by this, he rush'd with warlike heat
Against the three that came his force to meet :
Not more he fear'd each warrior's threat'ning spear,
Than boldest hearts the weakest infants fear.
At Gryphon now Rogero aim'd the thrust 590
Above the buckler's verge, the furious joust
His helm confess'd ; on either hand he reel'd,
Till, falling from his steed, he press'd the field.

Ver. 578.—*the joys of shameful life he fled*

For seats, where virtue, &c.] See Book vii. and x.

Against Rogero's buckler Gryphon sent
 The spear, that erring from the knight's intent, 595
 Struck on th' impassive orb with fruitless sound,
 And, hissing, glanc'd across the polish'd round;
 The veil it rent, and freed the magic rays:
 Advancing Aquilant receiv'd the blaze;
 On Guido Savage next, who came the last, 600
 The wondrous targe its beamy splendor cast.
 All fell—but little yet Rogero knew
 The finish'd joust, and swift his falchion drew;
 Then wheel'd his steed, when on the ground he view'd
 His prostrate foes with little force subdu'd; 605
 Knights, squires, and each that issu'd to the plain,
 The numerous foot, and all the female train.
 Alike he saw, as if in battle dead,
 Prone on the field each warrior courser spread:
 Till, casting down a casual glance, he spy'd 610 }
 From his left arm, dependent at his side,
 The veil that still was wont the light to hide.
 Sudden he turn'd, and sought with anxious care
 His bosom's best belov'd, the martial fair,
 Her whom he left, where, plac'd apart, she stood 615
 To mark the tilt begun; but when he view'd
 The fair no more, he deem'd her course was bent
 To free the lover, and his fate prevent,
 Who, while she stay'd to' attend the castle's strife,
 She fear'd in flames would lose his hapless life. 620
 Among the rest he sees the gentle maid,
 Their fair conductress, deep in slumber laid:
 Her in his arms he rais'd, and plac'd before
 High on his steed, the pensive warrior bore: 625

Her scarf he took, and wrapt with this, conceal'd
The buckler's blaze; the blaze no more reveal'd,
The virgin soon her heavy eyes unseal'd:

}

Rogero's features flush'd with rosy shame,
His down-cast looks his secret thoughts proclaim;
He fears that all his former deeds are stain'd 630
By such a conquest so ignobly gain'd.

Where shall I turn? (he cries) How cleanse away
The infamy of this ill-omen'd day?

The triumph here achiev'd each tongue shall tell,
Not due to valour, but to magic spell. 635

Thus he: with generous wrath his bosom glow'd;
When, what he sought, spontaneous chance bestow'd.
Far in a wood's surrounding gloom he found
A crystal well, that sunk beneath the ground:
Hither, when sated herds their food forsake, 640
Oppress'd with heat they came their thirst to
slake.

Rogero then—No more shall scorn or blame,
From thee, O shield! arise to taint my name:
No longer mine—I here such arms forego,
Nor more to thee will shameful succour owe. 645

Thus he; and swift alighting as he spoke,
With generous wrath a craggy stone he took;
To this the buckler, well secur'd, he ty'd,
And to the well consign'd—Lie there (he cry'd)
And with thee there my foul dishonour hide. 650

}

Deep was the well, and high the waters swell'd:
Ponderous the stone, and ponderous was the shield:
At once it sunk, a bed the bottom gave,
And sudden o'er it clos'd the limpid wave.

oon Fame divulg'd the deed, with trumpet's sound, 655
Through France, through Spain, through every region
round;

From tongue to tongue it spread, and many a train
Of noble knights aspir'd the prize to gain.

In vain they sought the forest, where, conceal'd
From human sight, remain'd the precious shield; 660
The dame who blaz'd the tale, refus'd to tell
What secret wood contain'd the fatal well.

When brave Rogero from the castle pass'd,
Where, with such little strife, to earth he cast
The knights of Pinabello's guard, and left 665
The valiant four of strength and sense bereft:
The light remov'd, each eye unclos'd appear'd:
Each from the ground his limbs astonish'd rear'd:
All day they commun'd of the wondrous shield,
That every sight in magic slumber seal'd. 670
While such discourse they held, the news arriv'd
Of Pinabello, late of life depriv'd;
Of Pinabello slain were tidings brought;
But yet unknown what hand the deed had wrought.

Deep in a vale, with gloomy woods confin'd, 675
The martial dame the recreant warrior join'd;
Where, in his panting breast and bleeding side,
A hundred times the vengeful blade she dy'd,
And from her seat the hateful spirit chas'd,
Whose impious deeds had all the land disgrac'd. 680
Then with that steed, which late with guileful art
The traitor took, she hasten'd to depart

And join her knight, but now explor'd in vain
Her former way, and rov'd o'er hill and plain
With travel long, while Fortune yet deny'd
To lov'd Rogero's sight her course to guide.

685

But he that hears my tale with grateful ear,
Must to th' ensuing book the rest defer.

END OF THE TWENTY-SECOND BOOK.



THE
TWENTY-THIRD BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE ARGUMENT.

BRADAMANT, after the death of Pinabello, loses herself in a wood: she is met by Astolpho, who, preparing to take his flight on the griffin-horse, entrusts her with the care of his horse Rabi-cano. Bradamant meets her brother Alardo, and goes with him to Mount Albano, from which place she sends Hippalca, her maid, on a message to Rogero, with his horse Frontino, which is afterwards taken from her by Rodomont. Zerbino, travelling with Gabrina, finds the dead body of Pinabello: He is accused of the murder, and led to be put to death. The arrival of Orlando and Isabella. Meeting of the two lovers. Mandricardo overtakes Orlando: their battle. Orlando, parting from Zerbino and Isabella, comes to the grotto where Angelica and Medoro used to meet. The manner in which he discovers the whole story of their love; which discovery ends in the total deprivation of his senses.

THE
TWENTY-THIRD BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

IF man to man his friendly succour lends,
It rarely proves but fair reward attends
Each generous deed ; at least we thus ensure
Our future peace, and Heaven's regard secure.
Who wrongs another, soon or late shall find 8
The punishment for evil deeds assign'd.
The proverb holds, that oft man's wandering train
Each other meet ; but mountains fix'd remain.
Behold the fate on Pinabello brought
In due return for all the ill he wrought, 10
While gracious God (who ne'er beholds unmov'd,
With sufferings undeserv'd the guiltless prov'd)

Ver. 7. *The proverb holds, that oft man's wandering train
Each other meet ; but mountains fix'd remain.*

From the ancient proverb, *Mons cum monte non miscetur*. The meaning of this rather uncouth passage is, that though mountains never meet, yet men, who are ever wandering from place to place, may unexpectedly meet with those to whom they have done a good or ill turn, and find their punishment or their reward.

The virgin sav'd; and ever saves the just,
Who, press'd with sorrows, place in him their trust.

When Pinabello deem'd the noble maid · 15
His wretched victim, in the cavern'd shade

Alive entomb'd, he little fear'd to view
Her vengeful arms his ruffian guile pursue ;
Where nought avail'd his near paternal seat,
T' avert the vengeance he was doom'd to meet. 20

Midst savage mountains Altaripa stands,
Fast by the confines of Pontieri's lands;
The hoary earl Anselmo's fair domain:
Of him was born, of unpropitious strain,
The wretch, whom now to 'scape from Clarmont's
sword.

No friends assist, no powers relief afford.
Beneath a hill the generous dame assails
His worthless life, and soon her arm prevails
Against a foe, that no defence prepares,
But heartless cries and unavailing prayers. 30

The traitor slain, who once her death design'd,
She turn'd again her dearest knight to find,
Whom late she left in strife unequal join'd.

But envious Fortune through the dreary shade,
By winding paths her wandering steed convey'd, 35
And to the woodland's deep recesses led,
What time, at sun-set, eve her shadows spread.

Unknowing where th' approaching night to pass,
She checks her reins, and on the verdant grass,
Beneath the covering trees, her limbs she throws, 40

To cheat the tedious hours with short repose;
Now watches Venus, Saturn, Mars, or Jove,
With every wandering star that shines above :

But from her sleeping sense, or waking mind,
Her dear Rogero never is disjoin'd. 45

She sighs to think revenge her soul could move
Beyond the softer claims of faithful love.
Insensate rage has sever'd me (she cries)
From all I hold most dear—Unheeding eyes!
That when I first my treacherous foe pursu'd, 50
Mark'd not the tracks of this perplexing wood:
Then had I known in safety to return,
Nor here been lost, dejected and forlorn.

In words like these she mourns without relief;
And now she broods in silence o'er her grief; 55
While winds of sighs, and floods of tears, that shake
Her gentle breast, a cruel tempest make.

At length the long-expected morn appears,
When streaky light the grey horizon cheers.
She takes her steed, that graz'd beside the way, 60
And, mounting, turns to meet the rising day.

Nor far she pass'd, when issuing from the wood,
She came to where the wizard's palace stood,
Where once, with many a fraud, Atlantes' power
Had long detain'd her in his magic bower. 65

Astolpho here she met, who lately gain'd
The griffin-steed, and but his flight restrain'd
For Rabicano's sake, till chance should give
Some trusty friend, his courser to receive.

The thoughtful Paladin his face display'd 70
Without his casque, when through the misty shade

Ver. 66. *Astolpho*—] The Griffin-horse came into the possession of Astolpho in the *xxiii* Book, ver. 173, where he destroys the enchanted dwelling of Atlantes.

The valiant Bradamant her kinsman knew,
And, greeting fair, impatient nearer drew ;
Declar'd her name, her covering helm unlac'd,
Reveal'd her features, and the knight embrac'd. 75

To Otho's son*, who sought some trusty friend
To whom he might his Rabican commend,
No friend could Fortune, at his present need,
Like Bradamant supply, to keep the steed
Till his return : and, when his flight was o'er, 80
Again in safety to his hand restore.

Their greeting done—Too long I here delay
My purpos'd voyage through a trackless way :
(Astolpho cry'd)—then to the maid he told
His flight design'd, and bade his steed behold. 85
She saw, but saw incurious what before
Her eyes had seen, when from th' enchanted tower
Atlantes' hand the flying courser rein'd,
And with the maid a combat strange maintain'd.
She calls to mind the day, on which she view'd 90
The parting pinions, and his course pursu'd
With sharpen'd sight, when, soaring to the skies,
He bore Rogero from her longing eyes. *

Astolpho tells, that to her friendly care,
He Rabicano gives, beyond compare 95
First in the course, whose swiftness leaves behind
The arrow parting on the wings of wind ;
To her his ponderous arms he means to give,
And wills her at Albano these to leave
Till his return : since armour might be spar'd, 100
Or aught of weight that could his flight retard.

* Astolpho.

His sword and horn he still retain'd, though well
His horn alone could every danger quell.
To Bradamant he gave the golden lance,
Which once the son of Galaphron to France
From India brought, whose hidden power was such
T' unhorse each champion with its magic touch.

105

Astolpho now bestrode the winged horse,
And slowly through the air impell'd his course,
Till Bradamant, who watch'd his upward flight,
All in a moment lost him from her sight.
So from the port the guiding pilot steers
Who dangerous sands and rocky shallows fears;
But when he leaves the rocks and sands behind,
He shifts each sail, and scuds before the wind.

110

115

The duke departing thus: the martial maid,
In deep suspense, awhile in silence weigh'd
The means to Mount Albano thence to bear
Her kinsman's steed and implements of war.
For now, with fond desire, her bosom burn'd
To see Rogero, in his absence mourn'd,
Whom (yet deny'd to meet) her anxious mind
At least in Vallombrosa hop'd to find.

120

While silent thus she stood in pensive mood,
It chanc'd a peasant on the way she view'd,
And him she bade Astolpho's armour take,
And place the weight on Rabicano's back,
Then lead the courser which the burden bore,
With that which Pinabello rode before.

125

To Vallombrosa now she sought the way, 130
 But doubtful of the track, she fear'd to stray
 From where she wish'd ; nor knew the peasant well
 The country round, and thus, as chance befel,
 A path she took, and through the forest wide
 At random stray'd, without a friend to guide. 135

At noontide hour they left the covert shade,
 And on a hill a castle near survey'd
 Of stately scite ; the virgin at the view
 Believ'd in this she Mount Albano knew :
 And Mount Albano there the dame beheld, 140
 In which her mother and her brethren dwell'd.
 This when she found, a sudden dread oppress'd
 Her heart, that flutter'd in her tender breast.
 Her coming known, she fear'd the pressing train
 Of friends and kindred would her steps detain, 145
 Where she, a prey to love's consuming fire,
 Might view no more the lord of her desire ;
 No more at Vallombrosa hope to meet
 Her dear Rogero, and their vows complete.

Awhile in doubt the maid her thoughts revolv'd ; 150
 At length from Mount Albano she resolv'd
 T' avert her steps, and thence her journey bend
 To where the Abbey's hallow'd spires ascend.
 But Fortune soon, in this pursuit, bereft
 Her breast of hope ; for, ere the vale she left, 155
 She on Alardo sudden chanc'd to light,
 And sought in vain to' elude her brother's sight.

Ver. 156.—*Alardo*.—] One of Bradamant's brothers. Romance writers give different accounts of the genealogy of the house of Clarmont. Take the following as most consonant to Ariosto. Of Guido of Antona, son of Buovo and Orlandina, daughter of the

This youth had station'd many a warlike band
 Of horse and foot, which, at the king's command,
 He lately rais'd from all the neighbouring land. 160
 Return'd, he chanc'd his sister here to meet;
 With seeming joy the pair each other greet;
 And now, in friendly converse, side by side
 Together join'd, to Mount Albano ride.

Thus to her native seats the fair return'd, 165
 Where Beatrice had long her absence mourn'd
 With fruitless tears, and sent, with anxious pain,
 To seek her through the realms of France in vain.
 But what are all the joys she here may prove,
 Her mother's fondness or her brethren's love, 170
 Compar'd to happiness so late possess'd,
 When lov'd Rogero clasp'd her to his breast?

Herself restrain'd, she purpos'd one should bear
 To Vallombrosa, with a faithful care,

King of Langues, were born Bernardo and Chiaramonte (Clarmont). The last died young without issue; and his parents, out of regard to his memory, gave the name of Clarmont to their castle, and called their family by the same name. Bernardo had eight sons, six legitimate, and two natural. The legitimate were duke Amon of Dordona; Buovo of Agramont, or Agrismont; Gerardo of Rosigniol; Leone (Leo), afterwards pope; Otho king of England, and Milo of Anglantes. The natural sons were Anserigi, and Elfroi, by some called Sanguino and Dado. Amon had, by his wife Beatrice, five sons, Guichardo, Richardo, Rinaldo, Alardo, and Richardetto, and one daughter named Bradamant; and, according to Ariosto, he had by Constantia one natural son, afterwards called Guido Savage. Buovo of Agrismont had two legitimate sons, Vivian and Malagigi; and one natural son called Aldiger, who entertains Rogero at the castle of Agrismont in the xxvth Book. Milo of Anglantes was father to the celebrated Orlando. Of Otho, king of England, was born Astolpho, the English duke.

See *Quadrip* della Storia d' ogni Poesia.

Her greeting kind, and tell him, how, detain'd, 175
 She with reluctance from his sight remov'd;
 And urge (if need to urge him) for her sake
 The name of Christian knight baptiz'd to take;
 Then woo her friends his amorous suit t' approve,
 And tye the knot of hymeneal love. 180
 By this her messenger, his generous steed
 She meant to send, which, fam'd for strength and
 speed,

Rogero priz'd; for though the Pagan lands,
 And all the realms the Gallic lord commands,
 With him no steed the courser's glory claim'd, 185
 Save Brigliadoro and Bayardo fam'd.

When good Rogero on the winged horse,
 Was borne aloft, a strange and fearful course,
 He left Frontino, which the martial dame
 Receiv'd in trust (Frontino was his name), 190
 And sent to Mount Albano, where, at large,
 Wanton he rov'd, or fed beneath her charge
 In plenteous stalls; or when he felt the rein,
 Was gently pac'd along the level plain:
 Thus, pamper'd high in ease, and nurs'd with care, 195
 His shining skin more sleek, more noble seem'd his
 air,

And now she urg'd her virgins to divide
 The pleasing task: each virgin soon apply'd

Ver. 186. *Save Brigliadoro and Bayardo--]*

.....ne sotto il signor Gallo,
 Pin bel destrier di questo, o piu gagliardo,
 Eccetto Brigliadoro solo e Baiardo.

The poet seems here to have forgotten Rabican, Astolpho's horse.

Ver. 187. *When good Rogero, &c.]* See Book iv. ver. 321.

Her ready skill, and wrought, of golden thread,
 A costly net, which o'er a pall they spread 200
 Of finest silk, and on the courser plac'd,
 With trappings gay, and rich embroidery grac'd.
 A maid she chose, of long-experienc'd truth,
 Whose mother, Callitrepbia, nurs'd her youth
 From infant years: to her she oft confess'd 205
 How far Rogero all her soul possess'd;
 Full oft his beauty and his valour prais'd,
 And every grace above a mortal's rais'd.

To her she spoke—Whom sooner shall I trust
 Than thee, Hippalca dear, discreet and just? 210
 In whom, like thee, of all my train (she cry'd,)
 Can I the message of my heart confide?
 Hippalca (such the faithful damsel's name)
 Was now dismiss'd; and, by the love-sick dame
 Instructed in her way, receiv'd, at large, 215
 To him (her bosom's lord) this tender charge:
 To say, that while in promise late she fail'd
 To reach the abby's walls, no change prevail'd
 In what she wish'd; but Fortune, that has still
 The sovereign rule of all, oppos'd her will. 220
 Thus she; then bade the damsel mount her steed,
 And by the golden reins Frontino lead:
 But should she, in her travel, chance to find
 A wretch so senseless, or so base of mind,
 To seize the steed, she will'd her but to tell 225
 The courser's lord, his folly to repel:
 For every knight she deem'd (whate'er his fame)
 In arms must tremble at Rogero's name.
 Much more she said, and by her trusty maid
 To lov'd Rogero greetings kind convey'd; 230

Which treasur'd in her mind, without delay
Hippalca bade farewell, and issu'd on her way.

For ten long miles the maid her journey held,
Through beaten path, thick wood, or open field :
One noon of day descending from a height, 235

As on a narrow pass she chanc'd to light
Stony and rough, fierce Rodomont she view'd,
Who arm'd, on foot a guiding dwarf pursu'd :
On her the cruel Pagan cast his eye,
And loud blasphem'd th' eternal Hierarchy, 240
To find a steed so stately and so fair
Without his lord, beneath a damsel's care.

Late had he sworn, his arm the goodly horse,
He first should meet, would seize by lawless force.
Lo ! this the first, and never could his need 245
Attain the conquest of a nobler steed.

But since to take him from a helpless maid
Honour forbade, awhile in doubt he stay'd ;
With eager looks he stood, and, gazing, cry'd,
Why art thou here without thy warlike guide ? 250

O ! were he here (Hippalca said), thy mind
Would soon forego the purpose it design'd :
Who this bestrides, excels thy arms in fight,
And through the world scarce breathes so brave a knight.
What chief (return'd the Moor) thus treads the fame 255
Of others down ?—Rogeró—said the dame.
Then he—The steed I mine can nobly make,
Which from Rogeró fam'd in arms I take ;

Ver. 232. *Hippalca bade farewell*—] He returns to Bradamant, Book xxxi. ver. 41.

Ver. 233.—*ten long miles*—] In the xxvith Book on the same occasion, Ariosto says thirty miles—a little slip of the memory.

B. XXIII. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 195

And should he seek his courser to regain
I here defy him to the listed plain. 260

The weapon's choice be his—this prize I claim—
War is my sport, and Rodomont my name!
Where'er I go, my steps he may pursue,
My deeds shall ever point me forth to view:
I shine by my own light, and mark my course 265
With tracks more fatal than the thunder's force.

Thus he; and turning, as these words he said,
The golden bridle o'er Frontino's head,
Leapt in the seat, and sudden left behind
Hippalca, weeping with distressful mind. 270

On Rodomont her threats and plaint she bends:
He hears, regardless, and the hill ascends;
Led by the dwarf, rage flushing on his cheeks,
He Doralis and Mandricardo seeks;
While the sad maid his flight indignant views, 275
And from afar with railings vain pursues.

Some other time shall speak what these befel:—
Here Turpin, from whose page the tale I tell,
Turns to the land, where bleeding on the plain
Lies the foul traitor of Maganza slain. 280

When Amon's daughter from the place in haste
Had turn'd her steed, and through the forest pass'd;
Thither, by different ways arriving, came
The good Zerbino, and her sex's shame*.

* Gabrina.

Ver. 277. *Some other time shall speak—*] He returns to Rodomont, Book xxiv. ver. 695. and to Hippalca, Book xxvi. ver. 401.

Ver. 281. *When Amon's daughter—*] See the beginning of the present Book, ver. 31.

Ver. 284. *The good Zerbino, and her sex's shame.*] See Book xxii. ver. 23.

He sees the body lifeless in the vale, 285
And tender thoughts his noble breast assail.

There Pinabello lay; and, drench'd in blood,
Pour'd from such numerous wounds the crimson flood,
It seem'd a hundred foes, in cruel strife,
Had join'd their swords to end his wretched life. 290

The knight of Scotland was not slow to trace
The track of horses' feet that mark'd the place,
In hope to find where from pursuit had fled
Th' unknown assassin of the warrior dead:
Meantime he bade Gabrina to remain, 295
And there expect his quick return again.

Now near the scene of death Gabrina drew,
Exploring all the corse with greedy view;
For still to every other vice she join'd
The deepest av'rice of a female mind: 300
And, but she knew not to conceal her theft,
Her hands rapacious had the knight bereft
Of every spoil; the scarf embroider'd o'er
With gold, and all the glittering arms he wore.
A belt of costly work she safely plac'd 305
Beneath her vest, conceal'd around her waist:
'Twas all she could; and, while of this possest,
The beldame griev'd in heart to leave the rest.

Zerbino now return'd, who, through the wood,
With fruitless search had Bradamant pursu'd; 310
The day declining, swift his course address'd,
With that dire hag, to find a place of rest.

Two miles remote they to a castle came
(Fam'd Altariva was the castle's name),
And here they stay'd to pass th' approaching night 315
That quench'd the splendor of departing light.

Here scarce arriv'd, on every side they hear
The voice of loud laments invade their ear,
And tears they see from every eye-lid fall,
As if one common woe had seiz'd on all, 320
Zerbino ask'd what cause their anguish wrought;
And heard of tidings to Anselmo brought,
How, 'twixt two mountains, in a shady dell,
His son, his Pinabello, murder'd fell.
Zerbino, doubtful of some evil nigh, 325
Withdraws apart from every prying eye :
He deem'd their sorrows must his death bewail,
Whom late he saw lie bleeding in the vale.

Soon came the bier with Pinabello dead,
While torches round their solemn splendor shed, 330
To where the thickest ranks lamenting stand,
Raise the shrill cry, and wring the mournful hand;
Where every eye is fill'd with gushing woe,
And down the beard the trickling currents flow.
Above the rest, see, impotent in grief, 335
The wretched father mocks each vain relief;
While all, as sacred custom each invites,
Prepare, with pomp, the last funereal rites;
Such as of old were wont the dead to grace,
But now forgot by this degenerate race. 340

The herald from the prince declares aloud
The sovereign will, and to the murmuring crowd
Proclaims, that vast rewards the man shall gain
Who tells the wretch by whom his son was slain.
From tongue to tongue the spreading tidings flew, 345
From ear to ear, till all the city knew :
At last they reach'd the hag, whose fury fell,
Not bears or tigers of the woods excel ;

Who now Zerbino to destroy prepares ;
 Whether through hatred that the knight she bears ; 350
 Or that her impious soul aspir'd to show
 A human breast that mock'd at human woe ;
 Or whether greedy gain her purpose wrought ;
 The presence of th' afflicted earl she sought ;
 There first with plausible speech his ears amus'd, 355
 And good Zerbino of the deed accus'd ;
 Then from her lap, to prove the story true,
 The costly belt produc'd in open view,
 Which, seen, too well the wretched parent knew. }

With tears, his hands uplifting to the skies, 360
 Thou shall not perish unreveng'd—he cries ;
 Then bids surround the house.—With furious zeal
 The people, rous'd, obey their ruler's will ;
 And while no danger near Zerbino knows,
 He finds himself a prisoner to his foes, 365
 Giv'n to Anselmo's rage, when sunk to rest
 Refreshing sleep his heavy eyes depress'd.
 51 Him in a darksome cell that night detain'd,
 They kept in shackles and with bolts restrain'd,
 Condemn'd to suffer for imputed guilt, 370
 In that sad valley where the blood was spilt.
 No further proof there needs the fact to try ;
 Their lord has sentenc'd, and th' accus'd must die.

When from her couch Aurora made return,
 With many-colour'd beams to paint the morn, 375
 The populace, as with one voice, demand
 The prisoner's life, and press on every hand
 With horse and foot ; Zerbino thence they led
 To atone the blood another's hand had shed.

On a low steed the knight of Scotland rides, 380
 His noble arms close pinion'd to his sides,
 And head cast down; but God, who still defends
 The guiltless that for help on him depends,
 Already watchful o'er the warrior's state,
 Prepares to snatch him from the hand of fate. 385
 Orlando thither comes, and comes to save
 The prince from shame and an untimely grave :
 Along the plain he view'd the swarming crew,
 That to his death the wretched champion drew,
 Galego's daughter, Isabella fair, 390
 With him he brought, who from the watery war
 And bulging vessel sav'd, was doom'd, at land,
 Th' unhappy captive of a lawless band ;
 She, whose lov'd form Zerbino's heart possess'd,
 More dear than life that warm'd his faithful breast. 395

Orlando since he freed the gentle maid,
 Had watch'd beside her with a guardian's aid.
 When on the subject plain her eyes she bent,
 She ask'd Orlando what the concourse meant :
 'Tis mine to learn the cause,—the warrior said, 400
 Then left his charge, and down the mountain sped.
 The throng he join'd ; when, from th' ignoble train,
 Zerbino soon he singled on the plain ;
 And by his outward looks, at first, divin'd
 The chief a baron of no vulgar kind. 405
 Approaching near, he ask'd his cause of shame,
 And whither led in bands, and whence he came.

At this, his head the mourning champion rear'd,
 And, when the Paladin's demand he heard,

With brief reply his piteous tale disclos'd, 410

In truth sincere, that soon the earl dispos'd,

For his defence, to combat on his side,

Who, guiltless of the charge, unjustly dy'd.

But when he found that Altariva's lord

The sentence pass'd, the noble sufferer's word 415

Stood more confirm'd; for in Anselmo's breast

He deem'd that justice ne'er her seat possess'd.

Between Maganza's house, and Clarmont, reign'd

A lineal hate, from sire to son maintain'd.

Then to the herd he turn'd with threat'ning cry: 420

Ye caitiff bands! release the knight, or die!

And who is he (said one to prove his zeal,

In luckless hour) that thus with words would kill?

Well was his menace, were our feeble frame

Of wax or straw, and his consuming flame. 425

He said; and ran against the knight of France;

And him Orlando met with rested lance.

That glittering armour, which the knight before,

The fierce Maganza from Zerbino tore,

Now proudly worn, could not the death prevent, 430

Which from his spear Anglantes' warrior sent.

On his right cheek was driv'n the pointed wood,

And though the temper'd helm the point withstood,

The neck refus'd the furious stroke to bear;

The bone snap'd short, and life dissolv'd in air, 435

At once, while yet the spear remain'd in rest,

He pierc'd another through the panting breast;

There left the lance, and Durindana drew,

And midst the thickest press resistless flew.

Of this, the skull in equal parts he cleaves; 440

That, of his head at one fierce stroke bereaves:

Some in the neck he thrust—a moment's space

Beholds a hundred dead, or held in chace.

A third are slain, or fly with fear oppress'd ;

His thundering falchion knows nor pause nor rest. 445

This quits his helmet ; that his cumbrous shield ;

And cast their useless weapons on the field.

Some leap the fosse, some scour the broad-way side ;

In forests some, and some in caverns hide :

That day Orlando gave his wrath the rein, 450

And will'd that none should there alive remain :

As Turpin writes, from whom the truth I tell,

Full fourscore breathless by his weapon fell.

W [The throng dispers'd, he to Zerbino press'd,

Whose anxious heart yet trembled in his breast: 455

What words can speak Zerbino's alter'd cheer,

Soon as he saw his brave deliverer near ?

Low had he fall'n, and prostrate on the ground

Ador'd the knight, from whom such aid he found ;

But to the steed his feet with cords were bound. 460 }

Orlando now his limbs from shackles freed,

And help'd him to resume his warlike weed,

Which late the captain of Maganza's train

Had worn in battle, but had worn in vain.

Meanwhile, Zerbino Isabella view'd, 465

Who on the neighbouring height attentive stood,

Till peace succeeding now to war's alarms,

She left the hill, and, bright in blooming charms,

Approach'd the field, where, when she nearer drew,

In her his best-belov'd Zerbino knew: 470

Her, whom from lying fame he mourn'd as lost

In roaring billows on the rocky coast.

As with a bolt of ice, his heart became
 All freezing cold ; a trembling seiz'd his frame :
 But soon a feverish heat, succeeding, spread 475
 Through every part, and dy'd his cheeks with red.
 Love bade him rush, and clasp her to his breast :
 But reverence for 'Anglantes' lord repress'd
 His eager wish——and, ah ! too sure he thought
 Her virgin grace the stranger's soul had caught. 480
 From sorrows thus to deeper sorrows cast,
 He finds how soon his mighty joys are past :
 And better could he bear to lose her charms
 By death, than see her in another's arms :
 But most to find her in his power he griev'd, 485
 Whose sword so late his threaten'd life repriev'd :
 No other knight (howe'er in battle prov'd)
 Had pass'd unquestion'd with the maid he lov'd.
 But what the earl had wrought that glorious day,
 Impell'd him every grateful meed to pay, 490
 And at the champion's feet his head subjected lay. }

Thus journeying on, the knights and princely maid,
 At length dismounting, near a fountain stay'd :
 The wearied earl releas'd his laden brows,
 And bade Zerbino there his helm uncloze. 495
 Soon as the fair her lover's face espies,
 From her soft cheek the rosy colour flies,
 Then swift returns——so looks the humid flower
 When Sol's bright beams succeed the drizzling shower :
 Careless of aught, she runs with eager pace, 500
 And clasps Zerbino with a dear embrace ;

Ver. 500. — *she runs with eager pace, &c.*] It may at first appear extraordinary, that this discovery should not have happened before,

There, while in silence to his neck she grows,
 Tear following tear, his face and breast o'erflows.
 Orlando, by their side, attentive stands,
 Their meeting marks, nor other proof demands 505
 That this unknown, who late his succour prov'd,
 Was prince Zerbino by the dame belov'd.

Soon as the fair-one rais'd her voice to speak,
 (The drops yet hanging on her tender cheek)
 Her grateful lips no other could proclaim 510
 Than the full praises of Orlando's name,
 His valorous succour for her sake bestow'd,
 And every courtesy the warrior show'd.
 Zerbino, who so lov'd the princely maid,
 Her good with his in equal scales he weigh'd: 515
 Low at his knee the generous earl ador'd,
 Who in one day had twice his life restor'd.

Thus they: when sudden from the neighbouring
 brake
 They heard, with rustling sound, the branches shake;
 Each to his naked head his helm apply'd: 520
 Each seiz'd the reins; but, ere he could bestride
 His foaming courser, from the woodland came,
 Before their sight, a champion and a dame.
 The knight was Mandricardo, who pursu'd
 Orlando's track, till Doralis he view'd: 525

as, by the poet's words, Zerbino may be supposed to have declared his name to Orlando when the Paladin first accosted him; but, it must be observed, in defence of Ariosto, that Isabella was not then present, being left by Orlando on the hill during the battle.

Ver. 523.—*a champion and a dame*—] See Book xiv. ver. 490.

But when the warrior from her numerous band
 Had won the damsel with his conquering hand,
 The zeal grew slack that urg'd him to obtain
 Revenge on him, who on the bloody plain
 Had Manilardo quell'd, and young Alzirdo slain. }
 He knew not yet the sable chief, whose might 531
 Had rais'd his envy, was Anglantes' knight;
 Though him his deeds and fair report proclaim
 A wandering champion of no common fame.
 Him, (while beside unmark'd Zerbino stood) 535
 From head to foot fierce Mandricardo view'd,
 And, finding every sign describ'd agree,
 Lo ! thou the man (he cry'd) I wish to see.
 Ten days my anxious search, from plain to plain,
 Has trac'd thy course, but trac'd till now in vain : 540
 So have thy deeds, in all our camp confest,
 With rival envy fir'd my swelling breast,
 For hundreds sent by thee to Pluto's strand,
 Where scarcely one escap'd thy dreadful hand,
 To tell the numbers which thy weapon slew 545
 Of Tremizen and Norway's valiant crew.
 I was not slow to follow, with thy sight
 To feast my eyes, and prove thy force in fight.
 Full well-inform'd I know thy sable dress;
 Thy vest and armour him I seek confess. 550
 But were not such external marks reveal'd,
 And didst thou with a thousand lurk conceal'd,
 Thy bold demeanour must too surely tell
 That thou art he in battle prov'd so well.
 Thee too, no less, (Orlando thus reply'd) 555
 All must pronounce a knight of valour try'd ;

For thoughts so noble never shall we find
The tenants of a base degenerate mind.

If me thou com'st to view—indulge thy will—
Unloose my helmet, and behold thy fill! 560

But having view'd me well, proceed to prove,
(What most thy generous envy seem'd to prove)

How much in arms my prowess may compare
With that demeanour thou hast held so fair,

'Tis there I fix my wish (the Pagan cry'd), 565
My first demand is fully satisfy'd.

Meanwhile the earl from head to foot explor'd
The Tartar round, but view'd nor axe nor sword;

Then ask'd what weapon must the fight maintain,
Should his first onset with the lance be vain. 570

Heed not my want—(he said) this single spear
Has often taught my bravest foes to fear:

A solemn oath I took no sword to wear,

'Till Durindana from the earl I bear:

Him through the world I seek—for such my vow, 575

When first I plac'd this helmet o'er my brow:

Which, with these arms, I conquer'd—all of yore,

By Hector worn a thousand years before.

This sword alone was wanting to the rest,

How stol'n, I know not; but of this possess 580

'Tis said the Paladin subdues his foes,

And hence his courage more undaunted grows:

But let me once his arm in combat join,

His ill-got spoils he quickly shall resign:

Yet more—my bosom glows with fierce desire 585

To avenge the death of Agrican, my sire,

Whom base Orlando slew in treacherous strife,

Nor could he else have reach'd his noble life.

The earl, no longer silent, stern replies :
 Thou ly'st, and each that dares affirm it, lies. 590
 Chance gives thee what thou seek'st—Orlando view
 In me, who Agrican with honour slew.
 Behold the sword thou long hast wish'd to gain,
 And, if thou seek'st, with glory may'st obtain.
 Though justly mine, yet will I now contend 595
 With thee my claim, and to a tree suspend
 The valu'd prize, which rightly thou shalt take,
 If me thy force can slay, or prisoner make.

He said ; and instant from his side unbrac'd,
 And Durindana on a sapling plac'd. 600
 Already now they part to half the space,
 Sent from the bow a whizzing shaft can trace :
 Already each on each impels his steed,
 And gives the reins at freedom to his speed :
 Already each directs his spear aright, 605
 Where the clos'd helmet but admits the light.
 The ash seems brittle ice, and to the sky
 With sudden crash a thousand splinters fly.
 The staves break short—yet neither knight would yield
 One foot, one inch—then wheeling round the field 610
 Again they meet, and with the vant-plate rear,
 Firm in each grasp, the truncheon of the spear
 That yet remain'd—these chiefs that once engag'd
 With sword or lance, like rustics now engag'd,
 (Whose blows dispute the stream or meadow's right) 615
 With shatter'd staves pursu'd a cruel fight.
 Four times they struck, the fourth the truncheon broke
 Close to the wrist, nor bore another stroke :

Ver. 611. —the vant-plate—] The part by which the spear was held.

While either knight, as mutual fury reign'd,
Alone with gauntlet arm'd the strife maintain'd : 620
Where'er they grapple, plate and steely scale
They rend asunder, and disjoint the mail :
Not ponderous hammers fall with weightier blows,
Nor clasps of iron stronger can enclose
With griping hold.—What now remains to save 625
The Pagan's honour who the challenge gave?
Or what in such a fruitless fight avail'd,
Where more th' assailant suffer'd than th' assail'd?
Each nerve exerting, with Orlando clos'd
The Pagan warrior, breast to breast oppos'd, 630
In hope with him the like success to prove,
As with Antæus once, the son of Jove.
With both his arms he grasps the mighty foe,
Tugs with full force, and draws him to and fro :
He foams, he raves—he scarcely can contain 635
His rising rage, nor heeds his courser's rein.
Collected in himself, Orlando tries
Whate'er advantage strength or skill supplies.
His hand he to the Pagan's steed extends,
And from his head by chance the bridle rends. 640
The Saracen with every art essays,
In vain, his rival from the seat to raise :
But, firm, with pressing knees, the earl preserves
His saddle still, nor here nor there he swerves ;
Till, yielding to the Pagan's furious force, 645
The girth breaks short, and sudden from his horse
Orlando falls to earth ; but still his feet
The stirrups keep, and still, as in the seat,
His thighs are strain'd, while with a clanking sound,
His armour rattled as he touch'd the ground. 650

The adverse courser, from the bridle freed,
Across the champain bends with rapid speed
His devious way: when thus the fair espy'd
Her lover borne from her unguarded side;
Without his presence fearful to remain, 655
His flight to trace she turns her palfrey's rein.

The haughty Pagan, as his courser flies,
Now soothes, now strikes, and now with angry cries
He threats the beast, as if with sense indu'd,
Who, mindless of his lord, his way pursu'd. 660
Three miles he bore, and still had borne the knight,
But that a crossing ditch oppos'd their flight:
There fell both man and horse: the Pagan struck
Against the ground, but from the dangerous shock
Escap'd unhurt; and here concludes his speed: 665
But how unbridled shall he guide the steed?
Him by the ruffled mane, in furious mood,
The Tartar seiz'd, and now debating stood
What course to take.—To whom the damsel cry'd,
Lo! from my palfrey be your need supply'd; 670
Bridled or loose, mine, patient of command,
Obeys the voice, and answers to the hand.

The Pagan deem'd it ill a knight became
T' accept the proffer of a courteous dame,
But Fortune, wont her kindly aid to give, 675
Found better means that might his wants relieve,
And foul Gabrina to the place convey'd,
Who, since her guile Zerbino had betray'd,
Shunn'd every stranger, like the wolf that flies
The hunters' voice, and dogs' pursuing cries. 680
This beldame now the youthful vestments wore,
Which Pinabello's dame had worn before;

She press'd the saddle (late her gorgeous seat)
 And unawares the Tartar chanc'd to meet.
 King Stordilano's daughter*, and her knight, 685
 Beheld with laughter such an uncouth sight;
 The dress ill-suiting her unseemly shape,
 And wither'd features like a grandam ape!
 From her, his courser's bridle to supply,
 He takes the reins, then, with a shouting cry, 690
 Her palfrey drives, that to the forest bears
 The trembling crone expiring with her fears,
 Through rough or even paths, o'er hills and dales,
 By hanging cliffs, deep streams, or gloomy vales.

But let us to pursue her tale forbear, 695
 When brave Orlando better claims our care:
 His saddle now repair'd, and every need
 Supply'd, he mounted on his warlike steed:
 Awhile he stay'd, in hopes, ere long, to view
 His foe return, the combat to renew; 700
 At length resolv'd the Tartar to pursue.
 Yet, ere he went, as one whose deeds express'd
 The soft effusions of a courteous breast,
 With gentle speech, fair smiles, and open look,
 He friendly leave of both the lovers took. 705

Zerbino mourn'd to quit the generous chief;
 And Isabella wept with tender grief:
 The noble earl their earnest suit refus'd
 To share his fortune, and to each excus'd

* Doralis.

What honour must deny; for greater shame, 710
 He urg'd, could never stain a warrior's name,
 Than, in the day of glorious strife, to make
 A friend his danger, and his toils partake.
 He then besought them, if the Pagan knight
 (Ere him he met) should chance on them to light, 715
 To tell him that Orlando meant to wait
 Three days at hand to end the stern debate,
 So late begun; and thence direct his course
 To where Imperial Charles encamp'd his force,
 Beneath the numerous banners rang'd, and where 720
 The Tartar prince to seek him might repair.

This done: as each his separate fortune guides,
 Zerbino here, and there Orlando rides:
 But ere the valiant earl the place forsook,
 His trusty falchion from the tree he took. 725

100 / The winding course the Pagan's steed pursu'd
 Through the thick covert of th' entangled wood,
 Perplex'd Orlando, who, with fruitless pain,
 Two days had follow'd, nor his sight could gain;
 Then reach'd a stream that through a meadow led, 730
 Whose vivid turf an emerald carpet spread,
 Spangled with flowers of many a dazzling hue,
 Where numerous trees in beauteous order grew,
 Whose shadowy branches gave a kind retreat
 To flocks, and naked swains from mid-day heat. 735
 With ponderous cuirass, shield, and helm, oppress,
 Orlando soon the welcome gales confess'd;
 And entering here to seek a short repose,
 In evil chance a dreadful scat he chose;

Ver. 723. *Zerbino here, and there Orlando rides.*] Zerbino and Isabella appear again, Book xxiv. ver. 105.

A seat, where every hope must fade away 740

On that unhappy, that detested day.

There, casting round a casual glance, he view'd
Full many a tree, that trembling o'er the flood,
Inscrib'd with words, in which, as near he drew,
The hand of his Angelica he knew. 745

This place was one, of many a meed and bower,
For which Medoro, at the sultry hour,
Oft left the shepherd's cot, by love inspir'd,
And with Cathay's unrivall'd queen retir'd.
Angelica and her Medoro twin'd, 750

In amorous posies on the sylvan rind,
He sees, while every letter proves a dart,
Which love infixes in his bleeding heart.
Fain would he, by a thousand ways deceive
His cruel thoughts, fain would he not believe 755
What yet he must—then hopes some other fair
The name of his Angelica may bear.

But, ah! (he cry'd) too surely can I tell
These characters oft seen and known so well—
Yet should this fiction but conceal her love, 760
Medoro then may blest Orlando prove.

Thus, self-deceiv'd, forlorn Orlando strays
Still far from truth, still wanders in the maze
Of doubts and fears, while in his breast he tries
To feed that hope his better sense denies. 765
So the poor bird, that from the fields of air
Lights in the fraudulent gin or viscous snare,
The more he flutters, and the subtle wiles
Attempts to 'scape, the faster makes the toils.

Now came Orlando where the pendent hill, 770
Curv'd in an arch, o'er-hung the limpid rill:
Around the cavern's mouth were seen to twine
The creeping ivy and the curling vine.
Oft here the happy pair were wont to waste
The noontide heats, embracing and embrac'd; 775
And chiefly here, inscrib'd or carv'd, their names
Innumerable, witness'd to their growing flames.
Alighting here, the warrior pensive stood,
And at the grotto's rustic entrance view'd
Words, by the hand of young Medoro wrought; 780
And fresh they seem'd, as when his amorous thought
For bliss enjoy'd, his grateful thanks express'd,
And first in tuneful verse his passion dress'd.
Such in his native tongue might sure excel,
And thus, in ours transfus'd, the sense I tell. 785

Hail ! lovely plants, clear streams, and meadows green;
And thou, dear cave, whose cool sequester'd scene
No sun molests ! where she, of royal strain,
Angelica, by numbers woo'd in vain,
Daughter of Galaphron, with heavenly charms 790
Was oft enfolded in these happy arms !
O ! let me, poor Medoro, thus repay
Such boundless rapture ; thus with every lay
Of grateful praise the tender bosom move,
Lords, knights, and dames, that know the sweets of love :
Each traveller, or hind of low degree, 796
Whom choice or fortune leads the place to see ;
Till all shall cry—Thou sun ! thou moon attend !
This fountain, grotto, mead, and shade defend !
Guard them, ye choir of nymphs ! nor let the swain 800
With flocks or herds the sacred haunts profane !

These verses, in Arabian written, drew
The knight's attention, who their idiom knew.
To him full well was many a language known,
But chiefly this, familiar to his own : 805 as
Such knowledge sav'd him oft, in distant lands,
From wrong and shame amid the Pagan bands.
But, ah ! no more th' advantage shall he boast,
That in one fatal hour so dearly cost !
Three times he reads, as oft he reads again 810
The cruel lines ; as oft he strives, in vain,
To give each sense the lie, and fondly tries
To disbelieve the witness of his eyes ;
While at each word he feels the jealous smart,
And sudden coldness freezing at his heart. 815
Fix'd on the stone, in stiffening gaze, that prov'd
His secret pangs, he stood with looks unmov'd,
A seeming statue ! while the godlike light
Of reason nearly seem'd eclips'd in night.
Confide in him, who by experience knows, 820
This is the woe surpassing other woes !
From his sad brow the wonted cheer is fled,
Low on his breast declines his drooping head ;
Nor can he find (while grief each sense o'erbears)
Voice for his plaints, or moisture for his tears. 825
Impatient sorrow seeks its way to force,
But with too eager haste retards the course.
As when a full-brimm'd vase with ample waist
And slender entrance form'd, is downward plac'd,
And stands revers'd, the rushing waters pent, 830
All crowd at once to issue at the vent :
The narrow vent the struggling tide restrains,
And scarcely drop by drop the bubbling liquor drains.

He wishes—hopes—believes some foe might frame
A falsehood to defile his fair-one's name ; 835
Or with dire malice, by the tainting breath
Of jealous rage, to work his certain death.
Yet he, whoe'er the foe, his skill had pro v'd
In feigning well the characters belov'd.

When now the sun had to his sister's reign 840
Resign'd the skies, Orlando mounts again
His Brigliadòro's back, and soon espies
The curling smoke from neighbouring hamlets rise.
The herds are heard to low, the dogs to bay ;
And to the village now his lonely way 845
Orlando takes, there pale and languid leaves
His Brigliadòro, where a youth receives
The generous courser ; while, with ready haste,
One from the champion has his mail unbrac'd :
One takes his spurs of gold ; and one from rust 850
His armour scours and cleanses from the dust.

Lo ! this the cot, where feeble with his wound,
Medoro lay, where wondrous chance he found.

No nourishment the warrior here desir'd,
On grief he fed, nor other food requir'd. 855
He sought to rest, but ah ! the more he sought,
New pangs were added to his troubled thought :
Where'er he turn'd his sight, he still descry'd
The hated words inscrib'd on every side.
He would have spoke, but held his peace in fear 860
To know the truth he dreaded most to hear.

The gentle swain, who mark'd his secret grief,
With cheerful speech to give his pains relief,
Told all th' adventure that the pair befel,
Which oft before his tongue was wont to tell 865

To every guest that gave a willing ear,
 For many a guest was pleas'd the tale to hear.
 He told, how to his cot the virgin brought
 Medoro wounded : how his cure she wrought,
 While in her bosom, Love's impoison'd dart 870
 With deeper wound transfix'd her bleeding heart :
 Hence, mindless of her birth, a princess bred
 Rich India's heir, she deign'd, by passion led,
 A friendless youth of low estate to wed. }
 In witness of his tale, the peasant show'd 875
 The bracelet by Angelica bestow'd,
 Departing thence, her token of regard,
 His hospitable welcome to reward.

This fatal proof, his well-known present, left
 Of every gleam of hope his soul bereft : 880
 Love, that had tortur'd long his wretched thrall,
 With this concluding stroke determin'd all.

At length from every view retir'd apart,
 He gives full vent to his o'erlabour'd heart :
 Now from his eyes the streaming shower releas'd, 885
 Stains his pale cheek, and wanders down his breast ;
 Deeply he groans, and, staggering with his woes,
 On the lone bed his listless body throws,
 But rests no more than if in wilds forlorn,
 Stretch'd on the naked rock or pointed thorn. 890
 While thus he lay, he sudden call'd to mind,
 That on the couch, where then his limbs reclin'd,
 His faithless mistress, and her paramour,
 Had oft with love beguil'd the amorous hour :
 Stung with the thought, the hated down he flies : 895
 Not swifter from the turf is seen to rise

The swain, who, courting grateful sleep, perceives
A serpent darting through the rustling leaves.
Each object now is loathsome to his sight;
The bed—the cot—the swain—he heeds no light 900
To guide his steps, not Dian's silver ray,
Nor cheerful dawn, the harbinger of day.
He takes his armour, and his steed he takes,
And through surrounding gloom impatient makes
His darkling way, there vents his woes alone, 905
In many a dreadful plaint and dreary groan.
Unceasing still he weeps, unceasing mourns;
Alike to him the night, the day returns;
Cities and towns he shuns; in woods he lies,
His bed the earth, his canopy the skies. 910
He wonders oft what fountain can supply
His flood of grief; how sigh succeeds to sigh.
These are not tears (he cry'd) that ceaseless flow;
Far other signs are these that speak my woe.
Before the fire my vital moisture flies, 915
And now, exhaling, issues at my eyes:
Lo! thus it streams, and thus shall ever spend,
Till with its course my life and sorrows end.
These are not sighs that thus my torments show;
Sights have a pause, but these no respite know. 920
Love burns my heart! these are the gales he makes,
As round the flame his fanning wings he shakes.
How canst thou, wondrous Love! surround with fire,
Yet, unconsum'd, preserve my heart entire?

Ver. 923. *How canst thou, wondrous Love! &c.*] It is much to be regretted, that the poet has disgraced this passage with such poor conceits.

I am not he, the man my looks proclaim, 925
 The man that lately bore Orlando's name;
 He, by his fair one's cruel falsehood, dies;
 And now, interr'd, her hapless victim lies.

I am his spirit freed from mortal chains,
 Doom'd in this hell to rove with endless pains; 930
 A wretched warning here on earth to prove
 For all henceforth who put their trust in love.

Through the still night, the earl from shade to shade
 Thus lonely rov'd, and when the day display'd
 Its twilight gleam, chance to the fountain led 935
 His wandering course, where first his fate he read
 In fond Medoro's strains—the sight awakes
 His torpid sense, each patient thought forsakes
 His maddening breast, that rage and hatred breathes,
 And from his side he swift the sword unsheaths. 940
 He hews the rock, he makes the letters fly;
 The shatter'd fragments mount into the sky:
 Hapless the cave, whose stones, the trees, whose rind
 Bear with Angelica Medoro join'd;
 From that curs'd day no longer to receive, 945
 And flocks or swains with cooling shade relieve;
 While that fair fountain, late so silvery pure,
 Remain'd as little from his arm secure:
 Together boughs and earthen clods he drew,
 Crag, stones, and trunks, and in the waters threw; 950
 Deep to its bed, with ooze and mud he spoil'd
 The murmuring current, and its spring defil'd.
 His limbs now moisten'd with a briny tide,
 When strength no more his senseless wrath supply'd,

Ver. 925. *I am not he,—*] Imitated from Catullus.
 Non ego sed tenuis vapulat umbra mea.

Prone on the turf he sunk, unnerv'd and spent, 955
All motionless, his looks on heav'n intent,
Stretch'd without food or sleep; while thrice the sun
Had stay'd, and thrice his daily course had run.

The fourth dire morn, with frantic rage possest,
He rends the armour from his back and breast: 960
Here lies the helmet, there the bossy shield,
Cuishes and cuirass further spread the field;
And all his other arms at random strow'd,
In divers parts he scatters through the wood;
Then from his body strips the covering vest, 965
And bares his sinewy limbs and hairy chest;
And now begins such feats of boundless rage,
As far and near th' astonish'd world engage.

His sword he left, else had his dreadful hand
With blood and horror fill'd each wasted land: 970
But little, pole-ax, sword, or mace he needs
T' assist his strength, that every strength exceeds.

First his huge grasp a lofty pine up-tears
Sheer by the roots, alike another fares
Of equal growth; as easy round him strow'd, 975
As lowly weeds, or shrubs, or dwarfish wood.

Vast oaks and elms before his fury fall;
The stately fir, tough ash, and cedar tall.

As when a fowler for the field prepares
His sylvan warfare; ere he spreads his snares, 980
From stubble, reeds, and furze, th' obstructed land
Around he clears: no less Orlando's hand

Levels the trees that long had tower'd above,
For rolling years the glory of the grove!
The rustic swains that mid the woodland shade 985
Hear'd the loud crash, forsook their flocks that stray'd

Without a shepherd, while their masters flew
To learn the tumult and the wonder view.

Thus far I've reach'd, but further to extend
The present story might, perchance, offend; 930
And rather would I here defer the rest,
Than with a tedious tale your ear molest.

Ver. 988. — *the wonder view.*—] This Book concludes with one of the finest incidents in the poem, which gives name to the whole work, the madness of Orlando. The narrative begins at ver. 726. Few passages, in any author, excel the remaining part of the book; and it is surely needless to point out to the reader of taste and discernment the pathos and fire of the poet, whether we contemplate his hero in the first dawn of his jealousy, or through the gradual progress of this passion, in which, while he seems to fly from conviction, he finds, by a train of concurrent circumstances, most artfully brought together, the truth forced upon him, till at length he breaks out into a frenzy, that closes the book with wonderful sublimity!

END OF THE TWENTY-THIRD BOOK.

THE
TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO

THE ARGUMENT.

THE extravagant feats of Orlando in his madness. Zerbino and Isabella are met by Almonio and Corebo, who bring Odorico bound, to receive from Zerbino the punishment for his infidelity. Arrival of Gabrina, and the sentence passed on these two by Zerbino. Zerbino fights with Mandricardo in defence of Orlando's sword : issue of the combat. Meeting of Mandricardo and Rodomont : A dreadful battle between them for Doralis, till, on the appearance of a messenger from the Pagan camp, and at the request of Doralis, they agree to break off the combat, and go to the assistance of Agramant.

THE
TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

WHOE'ER his feet on Cupid's snares shall set,
Must seek t' escape, ere in th' entangling net
His wings are caught; for sage experience tells,
In love's extreme, extreme of madness dwells.
Though each may rage not with the wild excess 5
Orlando rag'd, their frenzy all express
By different ways—what more our folly shows,
Than while we others seek, ourselves to lose?
Various th' effects of this destructive flame,
The first dire cause of frenzy is the same: 10
Love is a forest, where the lover strays
From path to path, bewilder'd in the maze;
And he who leads his life in amorous pain,
Deserves to feel the gyves and shackling chain.
Here some may cry—Brother, thy words have shown 15
Another's faults, forgetful of thy own.
Yes—in my intervals of sense I see
My bosom's conflict with the charge agree:
Yet have I striv'n, and hope in time to cure
The wounds I now from beauty's shafts endure. 20

I told, how from his limbs Orlando drew
 Furious his arms, and o'er the forest threw
 The scatter'd harness; how his vest he rent,
 And to the ground his fatal falchion sent:
 How trees he rooted, while the woods around 25
 And cavern'd rocks re-echo'd to the sound:
 Till rustic swains, to where the tumult spread,
 Their grievous sins, or cruel planets led.
 As nearer now the madman they beheld,
 Whose feats of strength all human strength excell'd; 30
 They turn'd to fly; but knew not where, nor whence,
 Such sudden fears distracted every sense.
 Swift he pursu'd, and one who vainly fled
 He seiz'd, and from the shoulders rent the head.

Ver. 34. *He seiz'd, and from the shoulders rent the head.*] Here the description of the extravagant and ludicrous feats performed by Orlando in his madness, which passages of our author, Cervantes seems to ridicule, when he represents Don Quixote in the sable mountain, debating whether he shall imitate the melancholy frenzy of Amadis de Gaul, or the more boisterous fury of Orlando.

"Have I not told you," said Don Quixote, "that I design to imitate Amadis, acting here the desperado, the senseless, and the madman: at the same time copying the valiant Don Orlando, when he found, by the side of a fountain, some indications that Angelica the Fair had dishonoured herself with Medoro: at grief whereof he ran mad, tore up trees by the roots, disturbed the waters of the crystal springs, slew the shepherds, destroyed flocks, fired cottages, demolished houses, dragged mares on the ground, and did an hundred thousand other extravagancies, worthy to be recorded, and had in eternal remembrance. And supposing that I do not intend to imitate Roldan, or Orlando, or Rotelando, (for he had all these three names) in every point, and in all the mad things he acted, said, and thought, I will make a sketch of them the best I can, in what I judge the most essential. And, perhaps, I may satisfy myself with only copying Amadis, who, without playing any mischievous pranks, by weepings and tendernesses, arrived to as great a fame as the best of them all."

Easy, as from the stalk, or tender shoot, 35
 A peasant crops the flower, or plucks the fruit :
 The lifeless body by the legs he took,
 And, as a club, against his fellows shook. -
 Two stretch'd on earth in lasting slumber lay,
 Perchance to rise not till the judgment day. 40
 The rest were soon dispers'd on every side,
 So well advis'd their rapid feet they ply'd ;
 Nor had the madman loiter'd to pursue,
 But on their herds with headlong speed he flew.
 The labouring hinds the peril near survey'd, 45
 And left their ploughs, with all the rural trade
 Of scythes and spades, while seiz'd with pale affright
 One climbs a roof, and one the temple's height,
 (Since elms and oaks avail not) trembling there,
 They view the dreadful havock from afar. 50
 Before his fury steeds and oxen yield,
 And swift the courser that escapes the field.

Now might ye hear in every village rise
 Tumultuous clamours, blending human cries
 With rustic horns and pipes ; while echo'd round 55
 The pealing bells from neighbouring steeples sound.

All seize such weapons as the time provides,
 Bows, slings, and staves ; and down the mountain's sides

Though much of the satire in the above citation must be allowed to be just, and though most of the actions recorded of Orlando in his madness may be given up to all the severity of criticism, yet no part of the description in the foregoing book, notwithstanding several of the circumstances are unfairly included in the ridicule of Cervantes, can be censured by any discerning reader ; but let the whole of the passage be tried by the standard of truth and nature, and compared with whatever is excellent of the kind in ancient or modern poetry, and surely Ariosto will not lose by the comparison.

A thousand rush ; while from the dells below,
As many swarm against a single foe. 60

As when the tide appears the shore to lave,
The southern wind impelling wave on wave,
Scarce curls the first, the second deeper swells,
And this, the third with rising force excels ;
Till more and more the victor-flood ascends, 65
And o'er the sands his liquid scourge extends.

Th' increasing throngs Orlando thus assail,
Pour down the hill, and issue from the vale.

Ten wretches first, then other ten he slew,
That near his hand in wild disorder drew. 70

None from his fated skin could draw the blood ;
His skin unhurt each weapon's stroke withstood :
To him such wondrous grace the King of Heaven
To guard his faith and holy church had given.

Could aught of mortal risk Orlando's life, 75

Great were his risk in this unequal strife :
Then had he miss'd the mail he late unbrac'd,
And miss'd the falchion which aside he cast.

The crowds, that view'd each weapon aim'd in vain,
With backward steps retreated from the plain ; 80

When mad Orlando, who no further thought,
The rustic dwellings of a hamlet sought :

All thence were fled ; yet there in plenteous store
He found such food as suits the village poor,

Of homely kind ;—but prest with pining fast 85
On roots or bread his eager hands he cast ;

Greedy alike devour'd whate'er he saw,

Or savoury viands bak'd, or morsels raw :

Then through the country round, with rapid pace,.

To man and beast alike he gave the chase : 90

Through the deep covert of the tangled wood
 The nimble goat or light-foot deer pursu'd.
 Oft on the bear and tusky boar he flew;
 And, with his single arm, in combat slew;
 Then, with their flesh, his savage spoils of fight 95
 Insatiate gorg'd his ravenous appetite.

Thus o'er the realm of France, from land to land,
 He ran, till on a day a bridge he gain'd,
 Where swift (enclos'd in craggy banks and steep)
 A river pours its current broad and deep, 100
 And built beside a stately castle stands,
 That far around the subject fields commands.
 What there ensu'd some future time shall tell;
 Now turn to what Zerbino next befel.

Orlando gone, awhile Zerbino stood, 105
 Then took the path the Paladin pursu'd;
 Scarce past a mile, slow riding, when he spy'd
 A recreant knight with hands behind him ty'd,
 Plac'd on an humble steed, and for his guard,
 On either side a knight in arms prepar'd. 110
 Full soon Zerbino, as he nearer drew,
 Full soon the lovely Isabella knew
 False Odorico, trusted late to keep
 Her virgin charms, like wolves to watch the sheep.
 Him had the prince preferr'd o'er every friend, 115
 From ill or shame his mistress to defend;

Ver. 104. *Now turn to what Zerbino, &c.*] Orlando appears again Book xxix. ver. 281. the last we heard of Zerbino was when he parted from Orlando, Book xxiii. ver. 723.

Nor could he think that faith, to him so prov'd,
Would fail to her, whom more than life he lov'd.

Then chanc'd fair Isabella to unfold
Her past escapes; and all the tale she told. 120
How, ere her vessel bulg'd beneath the wave,
She sought the bark her sinking life to save:
How Odorico had his faith betray'd;
And how the outlaws to their cave convey'd
Her helpless youth,—and scarce these words she said,
When, lo! she saw the traitor prisoner led. 126

The two, who thither brought the faithless knight,
On Isabella cast their wondering sight,
As one they oft had seen; with her they guess'd
Their dearest lord, the partner of her breast, 130
Companion rode; for well his blazon'd shield
The colours of his noble line reveal'd.
Approaching near, they saw with raptur'd eyes
His well-known face confirm their first surmise.
Swift from their steeds they leapt, with eager pace, 135
And open arms, impatient to embrace
Zerbino's knees: bareheaded now they stood
Before his sight, and lowly reverent bow'd.

Zerbino fix'd on each his earnest view,
And soon Corebo and Almonio knew; 140
Those well-try'd friends, to whom he gave the care
With Odorico to protect the fair.

Almonio then—Since Heaven has pleas'd once more
To thee thy Isabella to restore,
Why should I now, my much-lov'd lord, relate, 145
What well thou know'st—why in this captive state
Yon caitiff rides—for she, the fair betray'd,
Has long ere this his treacherous guilt display'd;

Has told, how, by his base and guileful art
 Deceiv'd, the wretch induc'd me to depart: 150
 How brave Corebo, to defend her, stood,
 And deeply wounded, shed his generous blood.

Attend the sequel—From the town in haste,
 With steeds and menials to the strand I pass'd;
 Still casting round my eager eyes, to find 155
 The friends and virgin whom I left behind.

Foremost I spurr'd, and travers'd all the shore,
 Search'd every part their feet had trod before:
 In vain—no sign appear'd on either hand,
 But some new marks of footsteps on the sand. 160

I follow'd these, and these my course convey'd,
 Beneath the covert of the woodland shade:
 Led by the sound of arms, at length I found
 Unblest Corebo bleeding on the ground—

Where is our virgin-charge I left so late? 165
 Where Odorico? say, what adverse fate
 Has here reduc'd thee to this wretched state?

Thus I—and now the fatal truth reveal'd,
 I sought th' apostate wretch, the wretch conceal'd
 Deceiv'd my search, and, all the day beguil'd, 170
 Through wood and brake I wander'd in the wild;

At length return'd to where a crimson tide
 From pale Corebo's wounds the herbage dy'd;
 Where (speedy help delay'd) the gloomy grave,
 Alone could take what art refus'd to save; 175

Where friars and monks might funeral rites prepare,
 When vain the healing couch and leech's care.

Then from the woodland to the town I bore
The fainting youth, his vigour to restore;
Where soon our host a sage physician found, 180
With sovereign plants to close each bleeding wound.
Corebo cur'd, he took his arms and horse;
To find the wretch we bent our eager course;
Him in Alphonso's regal court I met,
And dar'd in open list, against him set 185
My trusty lance: the king allow'd the fight
With every legal form to prove the right.
My cause prevail'd; for Fortune, who at will
Oft conquest gives, dispensing good or ill,
So help'd my arms, his strength avail'd no more, 190
And he remain'd a captive in my power.
Th' offender's crime reveal'd, the monarch gave
To me his life, to punish or to save.
Nor would I free, nor take his forfeit head,
But thus to thee in captive chains have led, 195
That thy decree might doom him to be slain,
Or kept alive, reserv'd for further pain.
Fame spoke thee join'd with Charles' imperial force,
And hopes to find thee, hither urg'd our course.
All thanks to Heaven! that thus, when least I
thought 200
To see my prince, my happy steps has brought:
Nor less my thanks, that thus I see restor'd
Thy Isabella to her plighted lord;
Whom late the traitor, with insidious art,
Had seem'd for ever from thy arms to part. 205
Zerbino silent, while Almonio spoke,
On Odorico fix'd his earnest look:

Hatred he little felt, but chief he mourn'd
 To find his hope from friendship thus return'd ;
 To think that one, who least had cause to leave 210
 His prince and friend, should both alike deceive :
 Till, with a deep-drawn sigh, he rais'd his head,
 And thus, benignant, to the prisoner said :
 Declare, unhappy, nor the truth suppress ;
 And if we right have heard, thy guilt confess. 215
 At this the faithless friend, low-bending, press'd
 His knee to earth, and thus his lord address'd.
 To err is still the lot of man below :
 But hence the good, from wicked minds, we know ;
 The last, by nature prone to every fault, 220
 At once give way to evil's first assault.
 The good for brave defence their weapons wield,
 But, if the foe be strong, no less they yield.
 Hadst thou, O prince ! consign'd to my command
 Some frontier-post, and had my dastard hand 225

Ver. 208. *Hatred he little felt, &c.*] Zerbino is one of the most amiable characters in the whole work, and must strongly interest the reader. His sentiments of mercy and generosity, on the reflection of his friend's treachery and ingratitude, may remind us of the behaviour of Titus the Roman emperor to his friend Sextus, who had conspired against his life, so admirably painted by Metastasio, an author who abounds in the most noble and elevated sentiments. Titus, in his interview with Sextus, thus endeavours to make him confess his guilt.

Observe me, Sextus, we are now alone,
 Thy sovereign is not present : open then
 Thy heart to Titus ; trust it with thy friend ;
 I promise thee Augustus ne'er shall know
 The secret thou discloset : tell me how
 Thy faith was first seduc'd : let us together
 Seek some pretence, t' excuse thee : I, perchance,
 Shall be ev'n happier than thyself to find it.

Act. iii. Scene viii.

Without resistance given the hostile powers
To plant the standard on thy conquer'd towers ;
Then might the foulest curse pursue my name,
The traitor's danger and the coward's shame.
But, if compell'd to yield, not blame would meet, 230
But praise itself might follow such defeat.

'Twas mine to guard my faith from mental foes,
Like some strong fort which numerous troops enclose.
With all the force supply'd me from above
By Heaven's supreme decree, full long I strove 235
To guard the fortress, till my vigour fail'd,
And the strong foe with stronger arms prevail'd.

Thus Odorico spoke; and more he said
To prove what mighty power his faith betray'd ;
With every art of soothing speech address'd, 240
He sought to move his injur'd prince's breast :
While good Zerbino stood in deep suspense,
Or to forgive, or punish such offence.

Thoughts of the heavy crime now seem'd to wake
His sleeping wrath, the traitor's life to take : 245
Now dear remembrance of their friendship past,
Which, till that fatal chance, so firm could last,
With pity's stream resentment's flame suppress'd,
And nourish'd mercy in his generous breast.

While, unresolv'd, Zerbino still remains 250
To free th' offender, or to hold in chains ;
By death to sweep him from his sight, or give
The wretch in lengthen'd sufferings yet to live,
Behold, loud neighing, comes th' affrighted steed,
Which Mandricardo from his bridle freed, 255

Ver. 254. *Behold, loud neighing, &c.*] See Book xxiii. ver. 673
where Mandricardo takes away Gabrina's bridle.

And with him bears the beldame pale for breath,
Whose guile had nearly wrought Zerbino's death.
The roving palfrey, from a distant ground
The courser hears, and seeks the kindred sound.

Soon as Zerbino thither turns his eyes ; 260

He lifts his hands in praises to the skies,
For two so wicked to his power resign'd,
Whose deeds deserv'd his deepest hate to find.

The noble knight that impious crone detains :

And now he ponders with himself what pains 265

Her crimes should meet ; to lop her nose and ears,

To make her piece-meal die, at first appears

A just decree ; to give her limbs for food

To gorge the hungry vultures' screaming brood.

Now this, now that, his wavering thoughts revolve ; 270

At length determin'd, fix his last resolve :

Then, turning to his friends, he cries—I give

My free consent the faithless youth shall live.

Though such offence may scarce forgiveness gain,

At least it merits not severest pain. 275

Still let him live, and freed, my mercy prove,

Since well I know his crime the crime of love.

Love has ere this a firmer bosom brought

To guilt more deep than Odorico's fault,

Which now we judge—to him let grace be shown 280

The suffering should be mine, and mine alone.

Blind as I was, so vast a trust to yield,

Yet knew how flame can catch the stubble field !

To Odorico then—Be this thy doom,

The penance of thy deed—thy task to come ; 285

One circling year this woman's steps attend,

From all that seek her life, her life defend ;

Her foes be thine—and range at her command,
The realms of spacious France, from land to land.

Zerbino thus: and him, who for his crime 290
Deserv'd his death, he gave some future time
To certain fate; expos'd in every shape
To perils human wit could ne'er escape.
So oft some ill-starr'd knight, or wife, or maid,
Her arts had ruin'd, and her guile betray'd; 295
Whoe'er her safety watches, risks his life
With wandering knights in many a dangerous strife.

Thus each was justly punish'd—she for crimes
That long for vengeance cry'd in former times,
While he, for her defence who wrongly stood, 300
In some stern fight must shed his vital blood.
A solemn oath Zerbino fram'd to bind
The recreant knight to keep the terms-enjoin'd;
And vow'd, if e'er he broke the faith he swore,
And fell again the captive of his power, 305
No longer prayer or mercy to regard,
But with his death his perjury reward.

Then to Almonio and his friend he made
A sign to free their prisoner; these obey'd
With slow reluctance; either griev'd to find 310
Himself defrauded of revenge design'd.
And now the faithless knight the place forsook,
And with him thence that aged beldame took.
What chanc'd to these, no further Turpin writes,
But thus another bard the tale recites: 315
The bard (his name untold) has thus declar'd:
Ere these together one day's journey far'd,
False Odorico, deaf to every call
Of plighted faith, to free himself from thrall,

B. XXIV. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 235

Around Gabrina's neck a halter flung, 320

And to an elm the crone detested hung;

And thence a twelvemonth (but unknown the place)

Almonio made him run the self-same race.

Zerbino, who the Paladin pursues

With earnest search, and fears the track to lose, 325

Now sends a message to his martial train,

Anxious what cause could thus their lord detain.

To good Almonio he his charge declares,

Which now to tell, the muse for haste forbears.

To good Almonio is Corebo join'd, 330

And Isabella sole remains behind.

Great was the love Zerbino had profess'd,

And great in Isabella's tender breast

For brave Orlando; great was either's zeal

To learn what chance the virtuous earl befel, 335

So late unhors'd: three days to' await the knight*,

Whose fearless arm rejects the sword in fight,

The earl had vow'd; and hence till thrice the day

Had rose and set, the prince decreed to stay,

And to the squadrons his return delay. 340 }

In every place through which Orlando pass'd,

His hapless way Zerbino following trac'd:

At length he came, where midst the lonely grove,

The fair ingrate had carv'd the notes of love.

The spring disturb'd; the trees, and cave he view'd;

Those lopt and rooted, this in fragments hew'd. 346

Not far he saw a sudden gleam and light,

And first the warrior-cuirass struck his sight:

The helmet next—not that which fam'd of yore,
The haughty African, Almontes wore. 350

He heard a courser in the woods conceal'd
Repeated neigh, and now advanc'd beheld
Where Brigliadoro graz'd the verdant plain,
While from his saddle hung the loosen'd rein.
He Durindana sought, and soon he found 355

The sword, unsheath'd, lie useless on the ground.
He saw the surcoat, which in pieces strow'd,
The wretched earl had scatter'd through the wood.

With Isabella now Zerbino gaz'd
In sad suspense, while every object rais'd 360
A secret fear, yet little they divin'd
(Howe'er they weigh'd the signs with anxious mind) }
Orlando from his better sense disjoin'd.

One drop of blood discover'd on the plain
Had imagin'd to their thoughts the champion slain. 365

And now a rustic hind with headlong pace
Approach'd, deep terror on his bloodless face,
Who late in safety from a rock's tall height,
Beheld the wretched madman's frantic might;
How from his limbs he drew his vest and arms, 370
And shepherds slew, and wrought a thousand harms.

He certain tidings to Zerbino gives,
Who, fill'd with wonder, scarce the truth believes,
Though clear the proofs—the shepherd's tale he hears
With pitying heart, and leaves his seat in tears. 375

He lights to gather from the woodland ground
The warlike relicks widely scatter'd round.
With him the gentle fair her steed forsakes,
And from the ground the arms and vestment takes;

When, lo! appears a dame in looks distrest, 380

Sighs frequent bursting from her mournful breast:

If any ask who thus her woes deplor'd,

'Twas Flordelis, who rov'd to seek her lord;

For Brandimart, departing thence unknown,

Had left the fair in Paris' regal town; 385

Where seven or eight long moons the mourner stay'd;

But when she found his wish'd return delay'd,

From sea to sea she pass'd, from plain to plain,

Far as the hills that sever France from Spain;

All parts she search'd, but where estrang'd from home

He liv'd in old Atlantes' magic dome: 390

Where, with Rogero Brandimart detain'd,

Where, with Orlando stern Ferrau remain'd.

But when Astolpho, with his wondrous blast,

Had driv'n the sorc'rer from his seats aghast, 395

To Paris Brandimart again return'd, -

Unknown to her, who still his absence mourn'd.

Thus lovely Flordelis, to chance resign'd,

Zerbino and his Isabella join'd:

Too well she Brigliadoro knew, who stray'd 400

Without his lord, and, ah! with grief survey'd

Each cruel object, while she heard relate

The dreadful sequel of Orlando's fate,

Who rov'd, of sense distraught, from place to place,

A wretched outcast of the human race. 405

59 Zerbino now the arms together drew,

And fix'd them on a pine in open view,

Ver. 383. 'Twas Flordelis, &c.] In the viiith Book, ver. 601. Flordelis is mentioned to have left Paris in search of her husband Brandimart, who was gone after Orlando.

A trophy fair ! and, lest some 'venturous knight
 (Native or stranger born) on these should light,
 The verdant rind this short inscription bore : 410

THESE ARMS THE PALADIN ORLANDO WORE.

As if he said—Let none these arms remove,
 But such as dare Orlando's fury prove.

This pious task perform'd, the prince with speed
 Prepar'd to part ; but, ere he rein'd his steed, 415
 Fierce Mandricardo came, who, when he turn'd
 And saw the trunk with those rich spoils adorn'd,
 He ask'd from whence, and who such arms dispos'd ;
 To whom Zerbino, all he knew, disclos'd.
 The Pagan king o'erjoy'd, no longer stay'd, 420
 Approach'd the pine, then seiz'd the sword, and said.

Let rashly none presume my deed to blame,
 This fatal blade by law of arms I claim :
 Long, long ere now this gallant sword was won,
 And still, where'er I find, I claim my own. 425
 Orlando, fearing to defend his right,
 Has feign'd his madness but to shun the fight :
 Then wherefore should I now forbear to take
 What coward baseness urg'd him to forsake ?

Rash knight, refrain—nor think (Zerbino cries) 430
 Without dispute, to snatch the glorious prize.
 If such thy claim to Hector's arms, then know
 'Twas theft, not valour, did those arms bestow.

Ver. 416. *Fierce Mandricardo*.—] See Book xxiii. ver. 690. where Mandricardo is last mentioned.

Ver. 424. *Long, long ere now this gallant sword was won*.—] Mandricardo seems to mean that he had proved his title to the sword, by the perilous adventure which he encountered at the castle of the Syrian Fairy, where he conquered the armour of Hector. The story is told at large in the note to Book xiv. ver. 240.

No more was said; for each with equal heat,
 And equal courage, springs his foe to meet. 435
 Scarce is the fight begun, when echo'd round
 A hundred blows their polish'd arms resound.
 Where Durindana threatens from on high,
 Zerbino seems a rapid flame to fly
 The falling stroke, whene'er to shun the steel 440
 Light as a deer he makes his courser wheel.
 Behoves him now his utmost skill t' employ,
 Since, from that edgè, accustom'd to destroy,
 One wound might send him to the dreary grove,
 Where love-lorn ghosts through shades of myrtle rove.
 As singled from the herd, the nimble bound 446
 Invades the boar, and cautious circling round,
 Shifts every side, but still maintains the field,
 By turns assaulting, and by turns repell'd.
 So brave Zerbino, as the sword descends, 450
 Or threats aloft, with wariest heed attends;
 Honour and life to guard, his sharpen'd eyes
 Watch every stroke, and as he strikes he flies.
 Thus he; while fiercely as the Pagau foe 454
 Whirls his dread sword, and gives or fails the blow,
 He seems a whirlwind that from Heaven descends,
 And 'twixt two Alpine hills the forest rends;

Ver. 443. — *shades of myrtle* —] Virgil in his sixth *Æneid* tells us, that the ghosts of departed lovers were thus disposed of.

Hic, quos durus amor crudeli tæbe peredit,
 Secreti celant calles, et myrtea circum
 Silva tegit. —

The souls, whom that unhappy flame invades,
 In secret solitude and myrtle shades
 Make endless moan. —

Dryden.

Now, bent to earth, the trees deep groaning bears,
Now from the trunks the shatter'd branches tears.
Though oft Zerbino turn'd aside, or fled 460
The trenchant blade, at length the Pagan sped
A downward stroke, that with full force imprest
Between the sword and buckler, reach'd his breast.
Strong was the corslet, strong the plated mail,
With texture firm; yet all could nought avail 465
Against the blade, that thundering from above,
Through plate and mail, and shatter'd corslet drove.
The sword fell short, else had the stroke design'd
Cleft all the knight, yet reach'd so far to find
The naked part, whence from the shallow wound, 470
A span in length, the warm blood trickling round
Stray'd o'er his shining arms, and stain'd the ground. }
So have I seen a silken floweret spread,
And dye the silver vest with blushing red,
Wrought by her snowy hand with matchless art, 475
That hand, whose whiteness oft has pierc'd my heart.
Ah! what avails the good Zerbino now
Courage to dare, or strength to urge the blow,
Though master of the war?—Here virtue fail'd,
Where stronger arms and stronger nerve prevail'd. 480
Slight was the wound, though by the crimson hue
Not slight it seem'd, but, startled at the view,
Pale Isabella's heart, with fear oppress,
All cold and trembling, sunk within her breast.
Zerbino, fir'd with generous thirst of fame, 485
With deep resentment stung, and conscious shame,
Rais'd both his hands, and with redoubled might,
Struck on the helmet of the Tartar knight.

The staggering Saracen the weight confess'd,
And to the saddle bow'd his haughty crest : 490
Th' enchanted casque made every weapon vain,
Else that dire stroke had cleft him to the brain.
Impatient for revenge, the Pagan lord
Against Zerbino's helmet rais'd the sword.
Zerbino, who the foe's intent beheld, 495
Swift to the right his well-taught courser wheel'd ;
Yet not so swift, nor could he shun so well
The biting edge, which on his buckler fell,
But through the plates from side to side it went,
And deep beneath his mailed gauntlet rent ; 500
Laid bare his arm, then glancing downward found
His steel-clad thigh, and deep impress'd a wound.
Now here, now there, Zerbino strikes in vain ;
The foe's tough arms, unhurt, the stroke sustain :
Each pass he tries ; no pass the plates afford, 505
And harmless from the surface bounds the sword.
Not so the Tartar king—his fiercer might
With such advantage urg'd th' unequal fight ;
Seven times his steel has drunk Zerbino's blood,
Has pierc'd or cleft his shield, his helmet hew'd. 510
By slow degrees life's issuing current drains
His ebbing strength, but dauntless he remains :
His vigorous heart, still nourish'd with the flame
Of inbred worth, supports his feeble frame.
Sad Isabella, now with fears distress'd, 515
To Doralis her earnest suit address'd ;
By every power adjur'd her to suppress
The battle's rage, and turn their strife to peace.
Courteous as fair, and doubting yet th' event
Of combat, Doralis with glad consent 520

To Isabella yielding, sooth inclin'd
 To friendly truce her valiant lover's mind.
 Not less Zerbino calm'd his vengeful heart
 For her he lov'd, consenting to depart
 Where'er she led, and, at her powerful word, 525
 Unfinish'd left the adventure of the sword.

But Flordelis, who ill-defended view'd
 Unblest Orlando's falchion, weeping stood
 To wail the loss; and oft she wish'd that fate
 Had brought her lord to share the dire debate. 530
 Yet could she e'er (if chance so fair befel)
 To her lov'd Brandimart the story tell;
 Stern Mandricardo, to his deadly cost,
 Might rue that conquest now his haughty boast.

From morn till evening, Flordelis in vain 535
 Still sought her lord, from morn till eve again
 At random stray'd, while he, whose loss she mourn'd,
 Once more to Paris' regal walls return'd.
 So long she travers'd mountain, hill, and wood,
 At length she came, where near a running flood 540
 The wretched Paladin she saw and knew——
 But let us now Zerbino's tale pursue.

Though scarce the noble youth his seat maintains,
 So fast his blood has flow'd, so fast it drains,
 Yet, self-accus'd, affliction rends his mind, 545
 For Durindana to the foe resign'd:

Ver. 535. *From morn till evening, Flordelis, &c.*] Here it seems that Flordelis departs without accosting Zerbino and Isabella, to whom she appears a stranger.

Ver. 542. *But let us now Zerbino's tale pursue --*] He returns to Flordelis, Book xxix. ver. 297. and to Mandricardo in the 639th verse of this book.

His pains increase—and soon with shortening breath,
He feels the certain chill approach of death.
Th' enfeebled warrior now his courser stays,
And near a fountain's side his limbs he lays. 550
Ah! what avails the wretched virgin's grief?
What can she here to yield her lord relief?
In desert wilds for want she sees him die,
No friend to help, no peopled dwelling nigh,
Where she, for pity or reward, might find 555
Some skilful leech, his streaming wounds to bind.
In vain she weeps—in vain with frantic cries
She calls on Fortune, and condemns the skies.
Why was I not in surging waters lost,
When first my vessel left Galicia's coast? 560
Zerbino, as his dying eyes he turn'd
On her, while thus her cruel fate she mourn'd,
More felt her sorrows, than the painful strife
Of nature struggling on the verge of life.

My heart's sole treasure! may'st thou still (he said)
When I, alas! am number'd with the dead, 566
Preserve my love—think not for death I grieve;
But thee, thus guideless and forlorn I leave,
Weighs heavy here—O! were my mortal date
Prolong'd to see thee in a happier state, 570
Blest were this awful hour—content in death,
On that lov'd bosom to resign my breath.
But summon'd now at Fate's unpitied call,
Unknown what future lot to thee may fall—
By those soft lips, by those fond eyes I swear, 575
By those dear locks that could my heart ensnare!
Despairing to the shades of night I go,
Where thoughts of thee, left to a world of woe,

Shall rend this faithful breast with deeper pains
Than all that hell's avenging realm contains. 580

At this, sad Isabella pour'd a shower
Of trickling tears, and lowly bending o'er,
Close to his mouth her trembling lips she laid,
His mouth now pale like some fair rose decay'd ;
A vernal rose, that, cropt before the time, 585
Bends the green stalk, and withers ere its prime.

Think not (she said), life of my breaking heart !
Without thy Isabella to depart :
Let no such fears thy dying bosom rend :
Where'er thou go'st, my spirit shall attend : 590
One hour to both shall like dismissal give,
Shall fix our doom, in future worlds to live,
And part no more—when ruthless death shall close
Thy fading eyes—that moment ends my woes !
Or should I still survive that stroke of grief, 595
At least thy sword will yield a sure relief.
And, ah ! I trust, reliev'd from mortal state,
Each breathless corse shall meet a milder fate,
When some, in pity of our hapless doom,
May close our bodies in one peaceful tomb. 600

Thus she ; and while his throbbing pulse she feels
Weak, and more weak, as death relentless steals
Each vital sense, with her sad lip she drains
The last faint breath of life that yet remains.

To raise his feeble voice Zerbino try'd— 605
I charge thee now—O ! lov'd in death (he cry'd)

Ver. 580. — *hell's avenging realm*—] We must always remember that the Italian-poets, without scruple, make use of the old Pagan mythology.

By that affection which thy bosom bore,
When, for my sake, thou left'st thy father's shore,
And, if a truth like mine such power can give,
While Heaven shall please—I now command thee live.
But never be it from thy thought remov'd, 611
That, much as man can love, Zerbino lov'd.
Fear not but God, in time, will succour lend,
From every ill thy virtue to defend;
As once he sent the Roman knight to save 615
Thy youth unfriended from the robbers' cave:
As from the seas he drew thee safe to land,
And snatch'd thee from th' impure Biscayner's hand:
And when at last all other hopes we lose,
Be death the last sad refuge that we chuse. 620

Thus spoke the dying knight; but scarce were heard
His latter words in accents weak preferr'd.
Here ended life—the light so drooping dies,
When oil or wax no more the flame supplies.
What tongue can tell how mourn'd the wretched maid,
What plaints she utter'd, and what tears she shed, 626
When in her arms her dear Zerbino lay,
All icy cold, a lump of lifeless clay!
Prone on the bleeding corse herself she threw,
Clasp'd his stiff limbs, and bath'd with tender dew: 630
She rav'd so loud, that all the plains around,
And woods, re-echo'd the distressful sound:
Nor her white breast, nor blooming cheeks she spares,
But cruel that she strikes, and these she tears;

Ver. 623. *Here ended life*—] The death of Zerbino, with all the attendant circumstances, is one of those fine passages so admired by the Italians, and which, if the translator has done any justice to his author, cannot fail strongly to affect the English reader.

She rends her golden locks, that know not blame, 635
Invoking, vainly, oft the much lov'd name;
And, little mindful of Zerbino's charge,
His sword had set her frantic soul at large,
But, lo! a hermit, wont each stated day,
To the clear fount to bend his lonely way, 640
Came from his neighbouring dwelling, timely sent
By Heaven's high will t' oppose her dire intent.
This reverend man, in whom at once were join'd
A sage experience and a gentle mind,
Whose hallow'd wisdom all examples knew, 645
And brought, as in a mirror, these to view;
Now, with a pious healing hand, address'd
The balm of patience to her wounded breast,
And many a woman bright in virtue nam'd,
In either volume's* sacred text proclaim'd. 650
He show'd how vain our search of bliss is spent,
When God alone can yield us true content;
That earth's enjoyments, ever shifting, leave
The wish unsated, and the hope deceive.
He wrought so far, with mild persuasion's breath, 655
To change her heart so lately fix'd on death,
And raise her wish to quit this vale of strife,
And dedicate to God her future life.
Yet would she never banish from her mind
Zerbino's love, or leave his corse behind, 660
Resolv'd through all her pilgrimage to bear
With her the relics of a form so dear.

Then, by the hermit's aid, who show'd in age
A strength of limb his years could ill presage,

* Old and New Testament.

Zerbino on his pensive steed she laid, 665
And travers'd many a mile the woodland shade.

The cautious hermit led not to his cell,
The lovely maid, with him alone to dwell, }
Where stood his mansion in the neighbouring dell.
His thoughts suggest—that hand we justly blame 670

Which bears at once the fuel and the flame,
Nor would in prudence or in years confide,
By such a proof to find his virtue try'd ;
But meant to lead her to Provence, where stood,
Near fam'd Marseilles, a holy house, endow'd 675

With wealthy gifts, whose spacious walls contain'd,
Of heaven-devoted dames, a saint-like band.
Awhile their steps a friendly castle stay'd,
Where, in a sable coffin clos'd, they laid }
The slaughter'd knight, and safely thence convey'd. 680

A spacious tract of land, day following day,
Through the lone wild and least frequented way,
They strove to pass unknown, secure from harms,
Now all the country round was fill'd with arms,
At length a knight they met, who stopp'd their course
With brutal insult and unmanly force: 686

Ver. 667. *The cautious hermit* --] So light a turn given to the narrative, after so beautiful and affecting a catastrophe, will, I fear, disgust the reader; but, at the same time, as it strongly marks the general complexion of the early Italian poets of this class, and more especially the genius of Ariosto, it was not thought allowable to omit the passage. These are among the parts alluded to by Gravina, who accuses Ariosto of "sometimes mingling ludicrous reflections or allusions with serious matter." See the Preface.

Ver. 680. —*thence convey'd.*] In the time of Ariosto, Joan, queen of Castile, in like manner carried with her, in a coffin, the body of her dead husband, Philip of Austria.

Zatta.

Of him some fitter time the muse shall tell,
Now turn to what the Tartar king befel.

The battle ended thus, his generous steed
The warrior from the reins and saddle freed, 690 }
And turn'd him loose to graze the flowery mead.
Pleas'd with the fair retreat, his limbs he laid
Beside the stream beneath the cooling shade ;
But lay not long, ere from a distant height
Descending to the plain, appear'd a knight : 695
Him, soon as Doralis beheld, she knew,
And pointing out to Mandricardo's view,
Unless the distant sight deceive my eyes,
Lo ! yonder comes fierce Rodomont (she cries).
To give thee combat from the hill he speeds, 700
And well such combat now thy prowess needs ;
Rage for my loss, affianc'd to his bed,
Has drawn down all his vengeance on thy head.

As the bold hawk a fiercer mien assumes,
Lifts his high head, and spreads his ruffled plumes, 705
If chance some birds of household breed he spies
(The starling, duck, or dove) before him rise :
So Mandricardo, well assur'd to bear
From Rodomont the bloody wreaths of war,
With joy exulting, mounts his steed again, 710
His feet the stirrups press, his hand the rein.

And now the wrathful chiefs approach'd so near,
That each the other's threatening words might hear.
The king of Algiers shook his haughty head,
Wav'd his right arm, and thus aloud he said : 715

Ver. 688. *Now turn to what the Tartar king befel.*] He returns to Isabella and the hermit, Book xxviii. ver. 676.

Soon shall I make thee rue thy fatal joy,
 Who for a short-liv'd gift, and amorous toy,
 Hast dar'd t' insult a prince, whose powerful hand
 Shall wreak the vengeance that such wrongs demand.
 Then Mandricardo thus:—In vain he tries 720
 To shake my courage who with threats defies.
 Women and boys are scar'd with seeming harms,
 Or those that ne'er were bred to use of arms:
 Not such am I—whose soul no terror knows,
 The hour of combat is to me repose: 725
 On foot, on horse, disarm'd, or arm'd, I dare,
 In the close list, or open field of war.

Rage follows rage, and threatenings threatenings breed;
 Their swords are drawn, and thundering strokes succeed.

Like winds that first but whisper through the brake, 730
 Next the high tops of elms or beeches shake;
 Then whirl the gathering dust aloft in air,
 Sweep cots away, and lay the forest bare;
 In tempests kill the flocks that graze the plain,
 And whelm the vessels in the howling main. 735

Ver. 727. *In the close list, or open field of war.*] This speech of Mandricardo is in the spirit of Hector to Ajax, before the single combat between them. Ajax had defied him with haughtiness, to which he replies:

Me, as a boy or woman would'st thou fright,
 New to the field, and trembling at the fight?
 Thou meet'st a chief deserving of thy arms,
 To combat born, and bred amidst alarms:
 I know to shift my ground, remount the car,
 Turn, charge, and answer every call of war;
 To right, to left, the dextrous lance to wield,
 And bear thick battle on my sounding shield.

Pope's Iliad, Book vii. ver. 285.

These Pagan knights, whose like could ne'er be found
Through all the realms for deeds of arms renown'd,
With dauntless hearts and many a dreadful stroke,
Pursu'd a fight that well their race bespoke.
With horrid clangor oft their falchions meet; 740
Earth seems to groan and shake beneath their feet;
While, from their batter'd armour, frequent fly
The fiery sparks, ascending to the sky.
On either side alike the knights assail
The plates to sever, or to rend the mail. 745
Each inch of ground they guard with equal care,
And in a narrow orb contract the war.
Amidst a thousand aim'd, the Tartar bends
A stroke, that driv'n with both his hands, descends
On Sarza's front—the many-colour'd light 750
Now skims in mist before his dazzled sight.
Back fell the African, of sense bereav'd,
The crupper of his steed his helm receiv'd;
He lost his stirrups, and his seat had lost,
Ev'n in her sight whose love he valu'd most; 755
But as a bow of temper'd steel, constrain'd
To yield reluctant to a potent hand,
The more it bends, the stronger, when releas'd,
It springs, and sends the shaft with strength increas'd:
Again the Pagan rising from the blow, 760
Return'd redoubled vengeance on his foe.
Where late himself the hostile weapon felt,
Stern Rodomont on Mandricardo dealt
The furious blade; the blade no entrance found;
The Trojan casque secur'd the knight from wound; 765
But scarce the Tartar, with the blow bereav'd
Of sight and sense, the day from night perceiv'd.

While Rodomont repeated strokes bestow'd,
And on his helmet laid the furious load ;
The Tartar's courser, that beheld with fear 770
The hostile steel which hiss'd aloft in air,
With his own fate his rider's safety bought :
For while to shun the fearful noise he sought,
Full on his neck descends the weighty sword,
And gives to him the wound design'd his lord : 775
He wanted Hector's helm his head to shield,
And hence he fell—but instant from the field
Rais'd on his feet, again with fearless look
Bold Mandricardo Durindana shook :
Rage swell'd his breast to view his courser slain ; 780
While Rodomont on him with loosen'd rein
Impell'd his steed ; but Mandricardo stood,
Firm as some rock amidst the billowy flood ;
While, with his lord o'erthrown, extended low
Was laid the courser of the Sarzan foe. 785
Sudden the king of Algiers left his steed :
His feet as swiftly from the stirrups freed,
And stood recover'd with the foe to wage
An equal fight ; no less the Tartar's rage
His rival met—Now blows succeeding blows, 790
Fierce and more fierce the burning combat grows.
But, lo ! an envoy came from Afric's bands,
With numbers more dispatch'd thro' Gallia's lands,
Back to their banners every chief to call,
And private knight, when need requir'd them all : 795
For he *, whose arms the golden lily bore,
Had in their works besieg'd the Pagan power ;

And did not speedy aid retrieve their fame,
Destruction soon must overwhelm the Moorish name.

The trusty herald, as he nearer drew, 800
By arms and vestment well the warriors knew;
But more he knew them by their force in field,
And weapons, which like theirs, no hands could wield.
He dares not rush between their wrathful swords,
And trust the privilege his name affords: 805
To Doralis he hastens first to tell

What deep mischance the Saracens befel;
How Agramant, Marsilius, and their train,
With Stordilano join'd, a siege sustain
From Christian Charles; and will'd her to relate 810
To either combatant their sovereign's state.

He said—the damsel with undaunted breast
Between them stept, and in these words address'd.

I charge ye, by the love which well I know
To me ye bear, your swords your courage show 815
T' assert a nobler cause—be now display'd
Your mutual worth our friendly camp to aid;
Where the brave Saracens besieg'd, await
Your saving arm, or some disastrous fate.

The herald then his embassy reveal'd, 820
And letters gave to Ulien's offspring*, seal'd
From king Troyano's son; when either knight
Agreed to calm his wrath, and stay the fight;
And fix the truce, till some propitious hour
Should raise the siege, and free the suffering Moor, 825
The siege once rais'd, no longer either breast
Shall let revenge, or rival hatred rest,

But rage anew, till, mutual valour try'd,
Their fatal title to the dame decide.

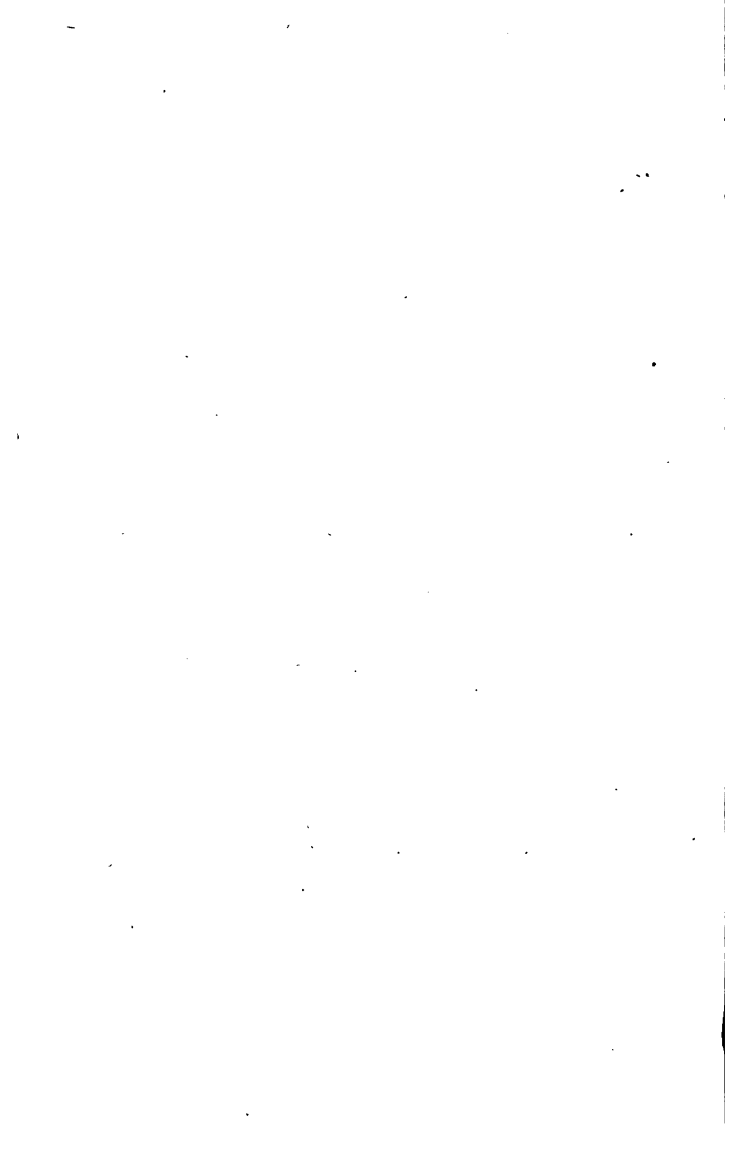
Thus they; and she to whom their faith they vow'd,
The sacred pledge for either warrior stood. 831

But Discord stern, whose unrelenting mind
Abhor'd all treaties that to peace inclin'd,
And Pride no less, the friendly terms oppos'd
That thus in hated league their anger clos'd. 835

But these in vain, with force combin'd, assail'd,
Where Love's resistless power o'er all prevail'd:
He bent his bow, his arrows swiftly flew,
Till Pride and Discord from the field withdrew:
The truce confirm'd by her whose sovereign sway 840
Compell'd each hardy champion to obey.

One warlike steed they miss'd, for in the fight
Lay dead the courser of the Tartar knight;
When thither gallant Brigliadoro stray'd,
Who cropt, beside the stream, the verdant glade. 845

Since here the book concludes, permit me here
To pause, and for a while the tale defer.



THE
TWENTY-FIFTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE ARGUMENT.

ROGERO goes, with the damsel, to deliver the youth who was condemned to die. Tale of Richardetto and Flordespina. Rogero and Richardetto arrive at the castle of Agrismont, where they are entertained by Aldiger of the house of Clarmont. Aldiger gives Richardetto unwelcome tidings of their kinsmen Malagigi and Vivian, who were prisoners to Lanfusa, the mother of Ferrau. Rogero engages to set them at liberty. Rogero's letter to Bradamant to excuse his absence. Rogero, Richardetto, and Aldiger, set out next day to rescue Malagigi and Vivian from the hands of the Pagans.

THE
TWENTY-FIFTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

THE thirst of honour and the force of love
Eternal strife in youthful bosoms move :
Nor yet is known which most inclines the scales,
Since this or that alike in turn prevails.
The call of glory and the sense of right, 5
Not little now can weigh with either knight
To stay the combat, for the damsel fought,
Till succour to the Moorish camp was brought.
But love more weigh'd—and had not her commands
(Whose power was sovereign) held their wrathful hands,
Ne'er had the battle ceas'd, till one subdu'd 11
Had stain'd his rival's wreaths with vital blood ;
And Agramant, with all his social train,
Had hop'd assistance from their arms in vain.
Condemn not Love—if oft he merits blame, 15
His generous influence oft our praise may claim.

All thoughts of contest o'er, the warlike pair
Tow'rd's Paris' walls, with her, the gentle fair,

Direct their steeds : the dwarf attends their course,
 The dwarf who led, to meet his rival's force, 20
 The jealous Rodomont, nor ceas'd to trace
 The Tartar, till he brought them face to face.
 A meadow entering now, at ease they find
 Four knights beside a crystal fount reclin'd.
 Two all unarm'd ; two wear their helmets lac'd ; 25
 And by their side a beauteous dame is plac'd.
 But who the knights and dame, some future time
 Shall tell—Roger first demands my rhyme :
 Roger who, but late the tale has shown,
 In the deep well his magic shield had thrown. 30
 Scarce from the well a mile Roger pass'd,
 When, lo ! an envoy came ; (of those in haste,
 Dispatch'd by king Troyano's son, to claim
 His champions to retrieve the Pagan name)
 From him he heard the camp's disastrous state, 35
 Where now the powers, besieg'd by Charles, await
 (Unless reliev'd) the last distress of fate. }
 At this, conflicting thoughts Roger press'd,
 And rent at once his undetermin'd breast
 With different calls—nor which t' attend he knows, 40
 Scarce time or place to weigh their choice allows.
 At length the herald he dismiss'd, and sped
 His course to follow where the damsel led,
 Who urg'd him on, till with the setting sun
 They reach'd a city by Marsilius won 45

Ver. 27. *But who the knights and dame, &c.*] He returns to these
 Book xxvi. ver. 498.

Ver. 30. *In the deep well.-*] See Book xxii. ver. 663.

From royal Charles, where still his arms maintain'd,
Amidst the heart of France, his conquest gain'd.
No bridge, nor portal here their haste delay'd:
None clos'd the portal, nor their passage stay'd;
Though near the fosse and gate was seen to stand 50
(To guard the place) an arm'd and numerous band.
The maid, his fair conductress, well they knew,
And hence, unquestion'd, let the knight pursue
His purpos'd way, till to the square he came,
And saw the thronging crowd and kindled flame, 55
Where stood the youth, who seem'd prepar'd to wait,
With downcast looks, his near-approaching fate.

But when, by chance, he rais'd his mournful eyes
Suffus'd in tears, Rogero, with surprise,
Believ'd in him his Bradamant he view'd; 60
So much the youth a kindred likeness shew'd;
Still as he gaz'd, and gaz'd with nearer look,
The mien and features Bradamant bespoke:
Or this (he cries) is she, or I no more
Am that Rogero I was call'd before. 65
Through too much zeal to give th' unhappy aid,
She hither came, and here, by fate betray'd,
A prisoner stands—Why did thy haste, my fair,
Forbid thy knight th' adventurous deed to share?
Yet, thanks to Heaven! that favour'd thus I come, 70
With timely succour to reverse thy doom.

His sword unsheathing with a furious look,
(His spear on Pinabello's knights he broke)
Against the throngs unarm'd his steed he guides,
O'er many a body, prest to earth, he rides. 75
With cries the wretches fly, and all the train
(So numerous late) are chas'd, or maim'd, or slain.

As when, beside a pool, the household breed
 Of smaller birds in flocks securely feed;
 If chance a hawk, descending from the skies, 80
 Amidst them strikes, and makes his single prize;
 Each quits his fellow, for himself provides,
 And from his feather'd foe for safety hides:
 So had you seen dispers'd the heartless crew,
 When first Rogero on their numbers flew: 85
 From four or six that thence too slowly fled,
 At one fierce stroke Rogero lopt the head:
 Cleft to the breast through some his steel he sent;
 There, through the skull; here, to the teeth it went.
 What though no ponderous helms their heads enclose, 90
 But lighter morions bind each wretch's brows,
 Yet, were they arm'd at proof, his raging blade
 Through temper'd helmet had the passage made.
 Rogero's strength, was not the strength we find
 In modern knights, or their degenerate kind: 95
 Not such the tusky boar or lion boasts,
 The fiercest beast of ours, or foreign coasts:
 Perchance the thunder may his force excel,
 Or that dire fiend (not he that reigns in hell)
 But that which, arm'd with fire, my lord employs, 100
 Which drives through seas and skies, and all destroys.
 Not less than one was slain at every wound,
 But oftener two at once he hurl'd to ground:

Ver 99. *Or that dire fiend (not he that reigns in hell)*

But that which, arm'd with fire, my lord employs,] By these lines the poet is supposed to mean a large piece of artillery belonging to the duke of Ferrara, which, from the vast execution it did in the field, had justly acquired the name of the great devil.

Rusccll.

Now four, now five he slew; and soon remain'd
A hundred breathless by his fatal hand. 105

The sword, which from his noble side he drew,
Cuts, like soft curd, the hardest steel in two.
This sword, the work of Falerina's skill,
Was in Orgagna's garden forg'd to kill
The bold Orlando: but her alter'd mind 110

Full soon, repented what she once design'd:
For all her arts she found in vain employ'd,
When with this sword her garden he destroy'd.
What horrors now, what slaughter must it yield,
When giv'n in such a warrior's hand to wield! 115

If e'er Rogero force or skill possess'd,
To save his mistress now it shone confess'd.
As the poor hare defends her from the hound,
So from the knight the crowds their safety found.
What numbers by his thundering arm lay dead! 120
But who shall number those who trembling fled!

Meanwhile the damsel loos'd the cruel bands
That captive held the wretched victim's hands;
With zealous speed she arm'd them for the fight,
The buckler grac'd his left, the sword his right. 125
Fir'd with his wrongs, he rush'd with vengeful mind,
To vent his rage on that degenerate kind,
Such were his deeds, as future times shall tell
That valour which he then approv'd so well.

The parting sun beneath the western main 130
Had plung'd, in ruddy waves, his golden wain,
When, with the youth preserv'd from cruel fate,
Rogero issu'd victor from the gate.

The youth, repriev'd by good Rogero's aid
From threaten'd death, his grateful thanks repaid : 135
Thanks ever due to one, who thus unknown,
Had for another's safety risk'd his own ;
Then begg'd him to reveal his name, and show,
To whom his life could such deliverance owe.

Rogero to himself—Lo ! there are seen 140
My fair-one's features, with her beauteous mien ;
But not the voice of Bradamant I hear,
Whose sweetness stole upon my raptur'd ear.
Not such the thanks that Bradamant would pay
To him she loves on this eventful day. 145
But can it be—or can my faithful dame
So soon forget her dear Rogero's name?

To ease his doubts, he thus with courteous grace :
These eyes are, sure, familiar to thy face ;
But when, or where, I seek in vain to find, 150
Thou, gentle youth, relieve my wandering mind.

Thou may'st, ere this, Sir knight, have met these eyes,
But when, or where, I know not, (he replies)
Since through the world, like other knights, I range
From land to land, to seek adventures strange. 155
Perchance in me a sister's form appears,
Who wears the cuirass, and the falchion rears.
Our birth was one—and oft our semblant make
Has held our parents in a fond mistake :
Not thou the first, of numbers, who, deceiv'd 160
By either's looks, have each for each believ'd,
One difference only seen—these tresses shorn
Scarce reach my shoulders, as by men are worn :
While hers, with lengthen'd growth, in many a fold,
Beneath her helm in silken braids are roll'd. 165

Once on her head a Pagan's weapon fell
 With ghastly wound, but how, 'twere long to tell;
 When, for her cure, a holy father's care
 (Of Jesus' train) lopt close her length of hair:
 No sign was then that either could proclaim, 170
 And all our difference was in sex and name.
 Her Bradamant, call Richardetto me;
 I brother to Rinaldo, sister she.

If now you deign to lend attention, hear
 A wondrous tale that well deserves your ear : 175
 A chance, which from our mutual likeness rose,
 Begun in joy, but nearly clos'd in woes.

Rogero, who no other tale requir'd,
 No sweeter converse than of her desir'd,
 Of her his best belov'd, and sole delight, 180
 Besought the youth his story to recite.

He thus began. As through the woodland shade,
 With tresses shorn, my martial sister stray'd,
 One day fatigu'd with toil, and faint with heat,
 She reach'd a pleasant fountain's cool retreat; 185
 Then left her steed, her shining helm unbound,
 And sunk in slumber on the verdant ground.
 Not all the fables ancient poets tell,
 Or fancy'd legends, can this truth excel.

A royal virgin, eager at the chace, 190
 Fair Flordespina, to the lonely place

Ver. 167. *With ghastly wound, &c.*] Bradamant, being without her helmet, was wounded by a Pagan, and afterwards cured of the wound by a father of the order of Jesus, who, for that purpose, caused her hair to be cut off; to which circumstance Ariosto several times alludes.

See General View of *Boyardo's Story*.

ottawa 27

By fortune came, and drawing nigh, survey'd
 My sleeping sister in bright arms array'd,
 All, save her head: her side the falchion wore,
 And every part a manly semblance bore. 195
 Struck with her form, awhile the virgin gaz'd
 In wonder rapt, till Love a passion rais'd,
 That soon through all her tender bosom blaz'd. }
 She urg'd her to the chace; then from the crew
 Of horns and hounds the seeming champion drew 200
 To where no prying witness might intrude,
 In deepest shade of friendly solitude.
 By words and gesture there, the gentle maid
 The secret of her deep-struck heart betray'd :
 With langour-darting eyes, with sighs of fire, 205
 She show'd her soul consuming with desire.
 Now from her cheeks the rosy colour fled;
 Returning warmth now flush'd the deep'ning red :
 Till, lost in thoughts of visionary bliss,
 And bolder grown, she ventur'd on a kiss. 210
 Too well my sister knew her manly frame,
 And martial guise, beguil'd the gentle dame;
 She knew no power t' assuage the fair one's smart,
 And soft compassion touch'd her friendly heart.
 Then to herself—'Twere better to reveal . . 215
 My woman's sex, and thus her frenzy heal;

Vér. 210. *And bolder grown, &c.*] This behaviour of Flordespina seems an outrage on all female decency; but it must be remembered, that our poet, in this extensive work, exhibits every kind of personage; that the attractions of Flordespina are merely the attractions of beauty, and that her character is so far from being amiable, that the Italian commentators have made her to represent inordinate and ungoverned passion.

To own myself a maid of gentle mind,
Not seem a youth of rude degenerate kind :
And well she said—~~for~~ recreant must he prove
A man, whose pulse was never warm to love ; / 220
Who, when some beauteous damsel courts his arms,
With youthful sweetness and alluring charms,
Should waste in talk the hour good fortune brings,
And, like a cuckoo, hang his coward wings.
My sister now, with mild address, prepar'd 225
To soothe the virgin, and the truth declar'd ;
That like Camilla, panting for a name,
Or fierce Hyppolita, she burnt for fame ;
And in Arzilla born, on Afric's shore,
From earliest youth the lance and buckler bore. 230

In vain she spoke ; her words no spark remove
Of passion kindled in the fire of love :
Too late the medicine came to heal the smart,
Since Love, alas ! too deep has plung'd his dart.
Whene'er she views the manly mien and arms, 235
A transient hope her beating bosom warms :
But soon the lov'd one's sex recall'd to mind,
Again is hope to cold despair resign'd.
Whoe'er that day had heard the virgin mourn,
Would sigh for sigh, and tear for tear return. 240

Did ever wretch (she cry'd) such torments know
To equal what I feel—my cureless woe !

Ver. 241. *Did ever wretch, &c.*] This complaint of Flordespina is closely copied from the fable of Iphis and Ianthe, in Ovid. See Metam. But while the poet makes Flordespina enumerate the unnatural loves of Semiramis, Pasiphaë, and Myrrha, and complain of the singularity of her own, he seems entirely to forget the story of Iphis and Ianthe.

All other loves, save mine, success may find,
 Whether of lawful or of impious kind.
 From the sharp thorn the blooming rose we part, 245
 But vain desire must ever rend my heart.
 Ah, ruthless Love! since envious of my bliss,
 Thou must, with cruel pains, pollute my peace,
 Suffic'd it not to give some common wound,
 Which others from thy various darts have found? 250
 Ne'er midst the human race, or bestial train,
 A female seeks a female's love to gain:
 No damsel's charms attract a damsel's sight,
 Nor hinds in hinds, nor lambs in lambs, delight:
 In air—on earth—but one, alas! can prove, 255
 And I, alas! that one so strange a love.
 Thus, ruthless power! my wretched fate must show
 A great example of thy rule below.
 The wife of Ninus, by the furies fir'd,
 To her son's bed with impious lust aspir'd: 260

Ver. 259. *The wife of Ninus*,—] Semiramis. This name is said to have been given her because she was nourished by doves, which are so called in the Syrian tongue. Many fables are told of her. Diodorus Siculus relates, that she was born in a wood, near the city of Ascalonia; that her mother was a reputed goddess, and her father a priest; that at her birth she was concealed in a grotto, where the doves, stealing milk from the shepherds, carried it to the infant. He relates, that she was afterwards brought up by the king's head shepherd, and in process of time married Ninus, king of Assyria. At his death she took upon her the government of the empire, and was famous for her courage and conduct. She was a princess of the most abandoned principles; and, in order to conceal her amours, is said to have caused every man to be put to death who partook of her favours. She had a son by her husband called Ninus, with whom, some say, she fell in love; and that, upon her solicitation to comply with her impious desires, she was slain by him. Others say, that she married him; and in order to cover her guilt, enacted a law, by which it was permitted for a mother to marry her son.

Porcacchi.

Myrrha her father lov'd ; the Cretan dame
A bull deceiv'd—but wilder is my flame.
In these the females still the males pursue,
And each attain'd her wish, if tales be true.
But here should Dedalus his arts apply,
No art could such a Gordian knot untie,
Which Nature fram'd to make my passion vain,
Nature, whose laws must every power restrain.

265

Thus to herself laments the fair distrest,
And feeds eternal anguish in her breast :
She rends her locks, she tears her lovely cheeks,
While on herself a mad revenge she seeks :
Touch'd with her woe, my pitying sister hears,
Sighs back her sighs, and answers tears with tears.
In vain she strives to cure her senseless love,
No words can soothe her, and no reasons move ;
While she, who seeks not comfort but relief,
Still mourns the more, and sinks from grief to grief.

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The day but little now remain'd to run,
Red in the west appear'd the setting sun :
And time requir'd to seek a port for those
That would not there in forest wilds repose ;
When now the virgin huntress made request,
For Bradamant beneath her roof to rest.
My sister, yielding to the dame consent,
Together to Marsilius' town they went ;
Where but for thee, whose aid so timely came,
These wretched limbs had fed the hungry flame.
Arriving, Flordespina to the place,
My sister welcom'd with a sister's grace ;
Then in a female garb her friend array'd,
That all who saw might know her for a maid :

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And more—she hop'd the cause of her distress
From error nourish'd by the manlike dress;
The dress once chang'd, her fond desire might cease, 293
And all her bosom be compos'd to peace.
Ah! how unlike that night the couch they press'd!
One soundly lock'd in all-composing rest:
One waking sigh'd, or if she clos'd her eyes,
In broken slumbers flattering visions rise. 300
She fancies, at her prayer, indulgent Heaven
To Bradamant a better sex had given.
As worn with tedious watch the patient dreams
(Long parch'd with feverish thirst) of limpid streams,
And cooling draughts; so she in sleep enjoys 305
What all in vain her waking thought employs.
Sudden she starts, extending round the bed
Her longing hands; but finds the blessing fled.
That night what offerings she to Macon vow'd,
To every power!—that for her sake bestow'd 310
Some miracle, in pity to her flame,
Might to a youth transform the virgin dame.
In vain she prays—in vain her tears—her love—
No Macon hears her, and no powers approve.
All night she mourn'd, till Phœbus from the wave 315
His locks disclos'd, and light returning gave:
The light return'd, from bed the pair arose,
Day adding force to Flordespina's woes:
For Bradamant (whom much it irk'd to prove
The hapless object of so vain a love, 320
And by her presence more enflame the smart)
Declar'd her speedy purpose to depart.
But, ere she went, fair Flordespina brought
A stately steed, with trappings richly wrought;

To these a surcoat join'd of costly make, 325 }
 Work'd by her hands, and will'd her, for the sake
 Of parting love, the precious gifts to take. }

And now my sister urg'd her speedy way
 To Mount Albano, ere the close of day;
 Where we, her mother and her brethren, flew 330
 With eager joy, her welcome face to view.
 Her helm unlac'd, we saw her tresses shorn,
 Which once in fillets round her head were worn;
 Nor less we wonder'd o'er her arms to find
 A surcoat us'd by knights of foreign kind; 335
 Her wound receiv'd and cur'd, her shorten'd hair,
 She told, and how in woods the huntress fair
 Surpris'd her sleeping; nor conceal'd the love
 The virgin proffer'd in the lonely grove;
 What pity touch'd her breast, and how the maid 340
 Had to the neighbouring fort her steps convey'd,
 Where in sad state she left the fair to mourn:
 With all that had befall'n till her return.

Well known to me was Flordespina's name,
 At Saragozza I beheld the dame, 345
 And since in France; when, not unmov'd, I view'd
 Her sparkling eyes, her features rosy hu'd,
 Her neck of snow—but cautious I repress'd
 The young desire awakening in my breast;
 Since hopeless love can never harbour rest. 350 }
 But now such fair occasion gave it way,
 My flame reviv'd that long extinguish'd lay.
 Love fram'd the web of hope, and in the loom,
 Prepar'd the texture of my joys to come:
 He taught me with the fair a pleasing part, 355
 To gain the bliss that fires the lover's heart.

Easy the fraud—my face and mien so like
My sister's form, that each beholder strike
With semblant looks, might well the dame deceive,
To make her fondly all I wish'd believe. 360

Awhile I paus'd—but young and amorous blood
Impell'd me to embrace the proffer'd good.
The mighty secret that employ'd my thought,
To none I told, of none I counsel sought.
At night I hasten'd where the arms were plac'd, 365
The arms my sister from her limbs unbrac'd.
Array'd in these, and mounted on her steed
I went, nor till the day deferr'd my speed:
All night I rode till early dawn of day,
While love and Flordespina led the way: 370
Her seat I reach'd, ere from th' ethereal height,
The sun in briny waves had quench'd his light.
Each knew the steed I rode, the arms I wore,
With which my sister left the gate before;
And, happy he, who with dispatchful care, 375
First brings the tidings to the royal fair;
Who from the princely dame can bear away
Such thanks and gifts as fits a queen to pay.

Soon Flordespina came, with eager pace,
The smile of transport brightening in her face; 380 }
And flew to meet me with a warm embrace.
Around my neck her milk-white arms she threw,
And kiss'd my lips as to my breast she grew.
Think at the time if Love employ'd his dart,
And drove the thrilling weapon to my heart. 385
My hand she seiz'd, nor sought the menial aid
Of page or dame, but to her room convey'd:

B. XXV. ORLANDO FURIOSO. 271

Her steps I follow'd : there, with eager haste,
Herself from helm to spur my arms unlac'd.
A garment, late her own, she took, and drest 390
My youthful members in a female vest,
Of artful work, with costly labour crown'd ;
And in a golden caul my hair she bound.
My eyes I govern'd like a bashful maid,
Nor look, nor voice, my manly sex betray'd. 395
And now she brought me to a stately hall,
Where knights and gallant dames, assembled all,
Receiv'd us entering, and such honours paid,
As suit the rank of queen or princely maid.
In secret oft I smil'd, when I beheld 400
The courtly youths, by soft desire impell'd,
With wanton glances meet my bashful eyes ;
Nor know what lurk'd beneath my coy disguise.

'Twas late; and now remov'd the festive board,
With every viand of the season stor'd, 405
The princely maid, by fond affection led,
That night receiv'd me to partake her bed.
The train of pages gone, with all the state
Of dames and maids accustom'd there to wait,
We, both despoil'd of vests, together lay, 410
With torches flaming like the beams of day.

Then thus—Be not surpris'd, O lovely maid !
To find your guest so soon return'd (I said) ;
When you, perchance, believ'd me wandering far,
And hop'd to see me—Heaven knew when or where !
First learn the cause I left you thus to mourn, 416
Then learn the cause of my unlook'd return.
Could my long dwelling here, O gentle dame !
Have quench'd the sparks of your unhappy flame,

Ne'er had I left your roof, by night or day, 420

Blest in your sight to wear my life away.

But since my presence more inflam'd your grief,

I deem'd my absence best could yield relief.

Chance led my travel from the beaten road

Through the deep mazes of a tangled wood, 425

Where loud resounding from the neighbouring shade,

I heard a female voice that call'd for aid :

I ran, and close behind a crystal brook,

Beheld a fawn, that in his meshes took

A naked damsel from the stream, and stood 430

Prepar'd to make the prey his living food.

I saw, and instant flew with sword in hand,

By force his cruel purpose to withstand.

The impious fisher, of his life bereft,

She to the stream return'd which late she left. 435

Thou hast not given me aid (she cries) in vain,

Ask what thou wilt, and, what thou ask'st, obtain.

A watery nymph am I, and here reside,

Beneath the surface of this limpid tide.

All miracles are mine—my power can force 440

The elements, and alter Nature's course :

Drawn by my voice, the moon her sphere forsakes,

Fire turns to ice, and air a body takes :

And oft, by simple words, my power I prove

To stop the sun, the solid earth to move. 445

Now fix thy choice—and at thy choice receive

What fits thee best to ask, and me to give.

So proffer'd she ; but I no wealth desir'd,

Nor rule, nor lands, nor o'er mankind aspir'd

To rise in knowledge, or in arts excel ; 450

Or gain a victor's name by warring well :

I only wish'd some healing balm to find,
 To cure the longing of thy love-sick mind;
 Nor more presum'd to speak, her wisdom best
 Could point the means—to her I left the rest. 455

Scarce had I ended, when beneath the tide
 Once more she plung'd, nor to my words reply'd;
 But in my face the sprinkling waters threw;
 And scatter'd o'er my limbs the magic dew.
 When (strange to tell) I felt through all my frame 460
 Unheard of change! my sex no more the same,
 And from a woman I a man became. }

To ease thy doubt—the certain proof receive
 Of what, untry'd, thy thoughts could ne'er believe.
 As in my former sex, so boast I still 465
 To thee devoted all my power and will.

Then task them both—for ever shall they prove
 Henceforth the slaves of Flordespina's love.

Thus I—and gently now her hand I seize,
 To soothe her hopes, and every doubt appease. 470

Grant Heaven! (she cry'd) if sleep such dreams can
 make,

I still may sleep, and never more awake.

Between us two, from all securely kept,
 A few short months th' important secret slept.

Ver. 472.—*never more awake.*] Two licentious stanzas of the original are here omitted in the translation, and were expunged by the poet from a printed copy in his possession, published in the year 1532. Ruscelli saw this copy in the hands of Galasso Ariosto, the brother of Ludovico, and it is certain, by a letter from Galasso to Peter Bembo, that Ariosto, had he lived, meant to have revised this edition, and to have given another with his last corrections and improvements; in which, it is highly probable, that most of, if not all, these exceptionable parts would have been totally changed or omitted.

But soon (how fleet is bliss!) our loves betray'd, 475
 Some spy the tidings to the king convey'd.
 My doom was seal'd--and thou, whose noble hand
 Redeem'd my life from yon relentless band,
 Beheldst me sentenc'd on the blazing pyre,
 My crime to expiate in consuming fire. 480

Thus Richardetto to Rogero told
 The tale of love, while through the night they hold
 Their dreary course, and gain a rising ground,
 With pendent rocks and caves encompass'd round.
 A narrow, stony path before them lay, 485
 And up the mountain led their weary way,
 Where Agrismont, a stately castle, stands,
 Which Aldiger, of Clarmont's race, commands.
 Though basely born, he, Buovo's offspring own'd,
 In Vivian and in Malagigi found 490
 A brother's name; but credit not the tongue
 That speaks his lawful birth from Gerard sprung.
 Whate'er his sire, the youth of generous strain,
 Was prudent, liberal, courteous, and humane;

Ver. 481. *Thus Richardetto to Rogero told, &c.*] This account of Flordespina's love for Bradamant is continued from Boyardo. Some readers may probably wish that our poet had made the conclusion happier for Flordespina, but it may be alledged, that the manners of this princess not exhibiting a pattern of female modesty, she has less claim to the sympathy of the reader, or the attention of the poet; and, perhaps, a kind of moral may be deduced, if we consider her being totally forsaken by Richardetto, as a punishment for her breach of chastity.

Ver. 492.—*from Gerard sprung*—] Gerardo, a younger brother of Amon and Buovo, (See note to Book xxiii.) and by what Ariosto here says, it should seem that some author had made Aldiger the legitimate son of Gerard.

And night or day, what chance might e'er befall, 495
 He watch'd with care his lov'd fraternal wall.

His kinsman, Richardetto, in the place
 Due welcome met, nor less the courteous grace,
 For Richardetto's sake, Rogero prov'd,
 A kinsman dear by Aldiger belov'd ; 500

Though now his guests he met not with that air
 Of cheerful greeting he was wont to wear,
 But pensive came : that day were tidings brought,
 Which fill'd his face with grief, his breast with thought.
 Instead of glad salute, with heavy look, 505
 Young Richardetto first he thus bespoke.

Alas ! my kinsman—hear me now disclose
 Unwelcome news, to speak our kindred's woes.
 Know Bertolagi, sprung of ruthless seed,
 Has with Lanfusa, ruthless dame ! agreed 510
 Large wealth, in sums of countless gold to pay,
 For which our captive brethren to convey,
 Vivian and Malagigi, to the hand
 Of Bertolagi, and his impious band.

E'er since the time Ferrau subdu'd in fight 515
 Our kinsmen, has she kept each helpless knight
 In the drear confines of a darksome cell,
 Till this dire compact which I loath to tell.

To-morrow's sun the prisoners, with a guard,
 He sends to Bertolagi, where prepar'd, 520
 Near fair Bayona, he with gifts of cost
 Shall buy the dearest blood that France can boast.
 To our Rinaldo on a swift-foot steed
 The news I sent, but much I fear our need

Requires that speedy succour from his sword, 525

The length of way forbids him to afford.

No force have I to lead against the foe ;

My will is prompt, but, ah ! my means are slow.

Then, whither shall I turn, what method try ?

If in his hands they fall, they surely die. 530

Ill Richardetto this advice receiv'd,

Which, grieving him, no less Rogero griev'd :

He saw, where both in pensive silence stood,

Opprest with evil chance, despairing good ;

Then dauntless thus—Compose each anxious breast,

With me alone this enterprise shall rest ; 536

Against a thousand weapons shall you see,

Mine boldly drawn to set your brethren free :

My single arm the Pagan bands shall face ;

Give but a guide to lead to yonder place, 540

Where such a compact threats your wretched race.

Soon shall the battle's tumult reach your ear,

Though distant, each the cries or groans shall hear,

Of those that bargain for each wretched thrall,

Of those that fly me, or of those that fall. 545

Thus he ; and what he spoke one warrior knew

By proof late seen, his deeds might well make true ;

While one scarce heard, or heard but as the words

Of those, whose boasting little hope affords.

But Richardetto him aside address'd, 550

And told how late his life, when sore distress'd,

Rogero sav'd, and well he knew his deed

On fit occasion would his speech exceed.

At this good Aldiger with alter'd mind,

To do him reverence every thought inclin'd ; 555

And, at his table plac'd, where Plenty pour'd
Her well fill'd horn; he honour'd as his lord.

And now the knights and noble youth agree,
Without more aid the captive pair to free.

The hour approach'd, when sleep prepar'd to close 560
The eyes of lords and knights in soft repose,
All, save Rogero's; in whose anxious breast
Corroding thought repell'd approaching rest.

The siege of Agramant, which late he heard,
Engross'd his thoughts; he knew each hour deferr'd 565

To join his lord, must sully his fair fame;
Nor could he, but with deepest sense of shame,
Assist his sovereign's foes, and own the Christian name. }

His change of faith at other times had prov'd
A mind sincere, by pure religion mov'd, 570

But now, when Agramant, in state distress,
Requir'd his arm, might rather speak him prest
With dastard fear, than urg'd by force of truth:
While these reflexions pain the generous youth,
He dares not yet to Agramant depart, 575

Without her leave, the sovereign of his heart.
Each thought by turns his dubious bosom sways;
Now this prevails, and now more lightly weighs.

Once had he hop'd, but vainly hop'd, to meet
His Bradamant at Flordespina's seat, 580

Which with the guiding fair and martial maid *,
He lately sought in Richardetto's aid.

And now he calls to mind his first design,
At Vallambrosa's walls his love to join,

* Bradamant.

His virgin love, who there might well expect 585
 His sight in vain, and blame his slow neglect.
 His thoughts thus changing, never at a stay,
 He fix'd at length, by letter to convey
 His secret soul; though doubtful yet whose care
 Might to her hand the gentle message bear; 590
 Yet trusts that chance would on his way provide
 A messenger, in whom he might confide.
 He quits his bed—and pens and light demands :
 The ready pages, with officious hands,
 Each need supply—and first, as lovers use, 595
 He greets her fair, then greets th' unwelcome news.
 He bids her think, on him what shame must wait,
 Should death or bondage be his sovereign's fate :
 That since he hop'd her husband's name to gain,
 No slightest blemish must his honour stain : 600
 As nought impure must her pure love enjoy,
 Whose soul was truth, refin'd from all alloy.
 If e'er he wish'd to purchase virtuous fame,
 Or wish'd, when purchas'd, to preserve the claim,
 What must he now, when she, his future wife, 605
 Would share with him in each event of life ?

Ver. 593. *He quits his bed,—and pens and light, &c.*

The Italian.

..... salta delle piume,
 Sa fà dar carta, inchiostro, penna e lume

Literally,

..... He leaps from his bed,

And causes paper, ink, pens, and a light to be given him.

These familiar passages cannot well be rendered in our language; and it is surely difficult to convey, in any tolerable manner, the author's sense in English verse.

With him in weal or woe be ever join'd,
Two bodies link'd by one informing mind?
And as he oft had vow'd, he thus once more
His vows confirm'd; the fated season o'er, 610
For which he to his lord must keep unstain'd
His loyal truth; he then, if life remain'd,
By every proof would all her fears relieve,
And Christian faith with open rites receive;
And from her sire, her brother, all her train 615
Of kindred friends, her hand in marriage gain.
First will I raise (he said) with thy consent,
The siege by which my sovereign lord is pent,
Lest men should say, while Agramant maintain'd
His prosperous state, Rogero firm remain'd; 620
But now, for Charles, since Fortune changes hands,
He spreads his standard with the victors' bands.
Some thrice five days, or twenty, let me prove
My force, my monarch's danger to remove,
Then will I frame a just excuse, to take 625
My leave of Agramant—for honour's sake,
I ask no more, and all my future life
I give to thee, my mistress and my wife.

In phrase like this, Rogero painted well
His secret thoughts, which scarce the Muse can tell; 630
Nor stay'd his pen, till words, fast flowing o'er,
The love-directed page could hold no more.
The letter ending here, the lines he seal'd,
And sealing, in his careful bosom held,

Ver. 629. *In phrase like this, &c.*] Spenser has in like manner introduced a letter into his poem, upon which Mr. Upton observes, "Spenser has not the authority of Homer and Virgil for introducing an epistle in his epic poem, but he has the authority of Ariosto."

In hopes some friend, ere one revolving day, 635
Might to her hand the gentle charge convey.

The letter clos'd, he clos'd in slumber deep,
His heavy lids o'er-watch'd—the Power of Sleep
Stood near his couch, and o'er his members threw
The peaceful drops of Lethe's silent dew. 640

He slept, till in the east a breaking cloud,
With blended hues of white and purple glow'd ;
Whence flowers were strow'd o'er all the smiling skies,
And, thron'd in gold, the morn began to rise.

When now the birds from every verdant spray, 645
With early music hail'd the new-born day,
Good Aldiger (Rogero thence to lead,
With Richardetto, where their venturous deed
Must set the brethren free from captive bands,
Condemn'd to impious Bertolagi's hands) 650
Was first on foot; and with him either guest
Who heard the summons, left his downy rest.
Now cloth'd with temper'd steel, in meet array,
Rogero, with the kinsmen took his way.

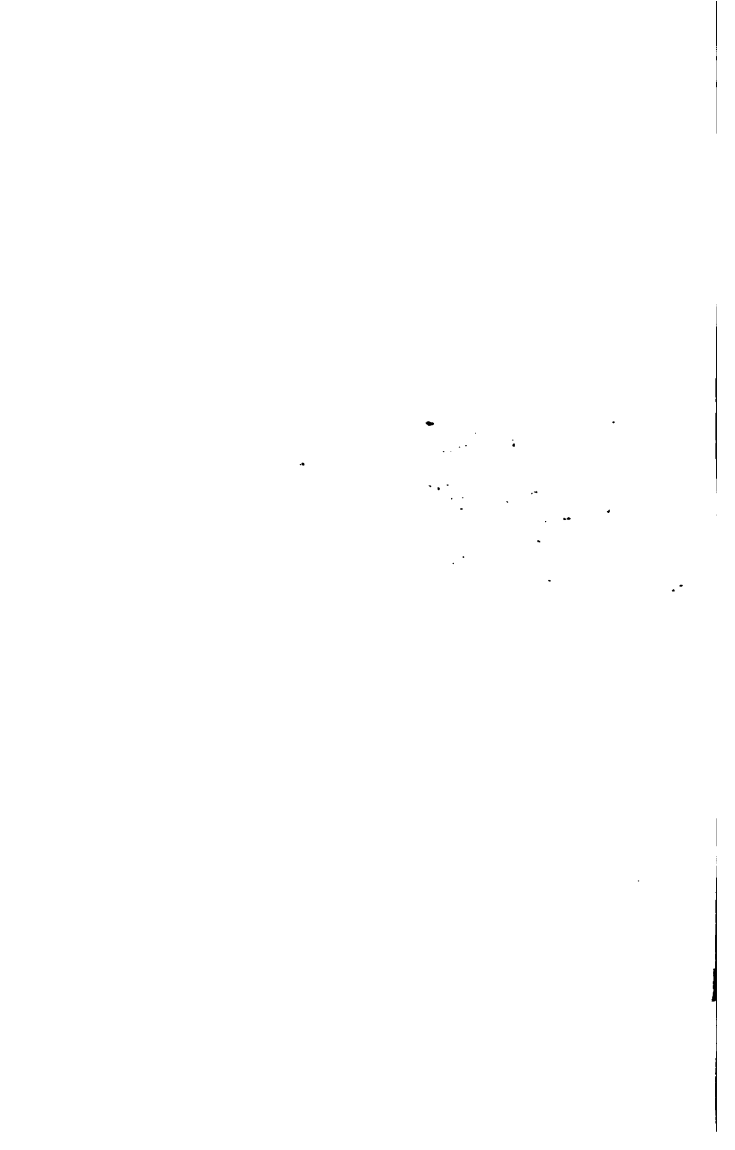
Oft had Rogero pray'd, but pray'd in vain, 655
His single arm might that day's glory gain ;
The two, through ardour in their kinsmen's cause
To join his arms, and urg'd by honour's laws,
Like rocks unmov'd, refus'd to him to yield
Alone the danger of so brave a field. 660

The hour approach'd, when either Pagan train
Prepar'd to bring each car, and loaded wain,
With Malagigi, Vivian, and the gold
For which the wretched chiefs were bought and sold.
The warriors reach'd the place: a field that lay, 665
Of wide extent, expos'd to Phœbus' ray:

No laurel there, no myrtle's fragrant wood,
Nor oak, nor elm, nor lofty cypress stood;
But thorns and brambles choak'd the barren soil,
That felt no spade, nor own'd the ploughman's toil. 670
The three bold champions check'd their coursers' rein,
Where stretch'd a path extending o'er the plain;
When drawing nigh, a warrior they behold,
Array'd in costly arms that flam'd with gold,
In whose fair shield of vivid green, appears 675
The wondrous bird that lives a thousand years.

Here cease, my lord, while thus the book I close,
And, pausing here, entreat awhile repose.





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